MEGAZONE

AUSTRALIA'S ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE JUNE 90

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TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

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SUPER Cyberball Contest

Leisure Suit Larry EXPOSED

Dragon's Lair II

Elvira: The Game

20 Games Reviewed

Megadrive Review

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

Wizards of Zork

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ZAP! POW! ZOWIE!

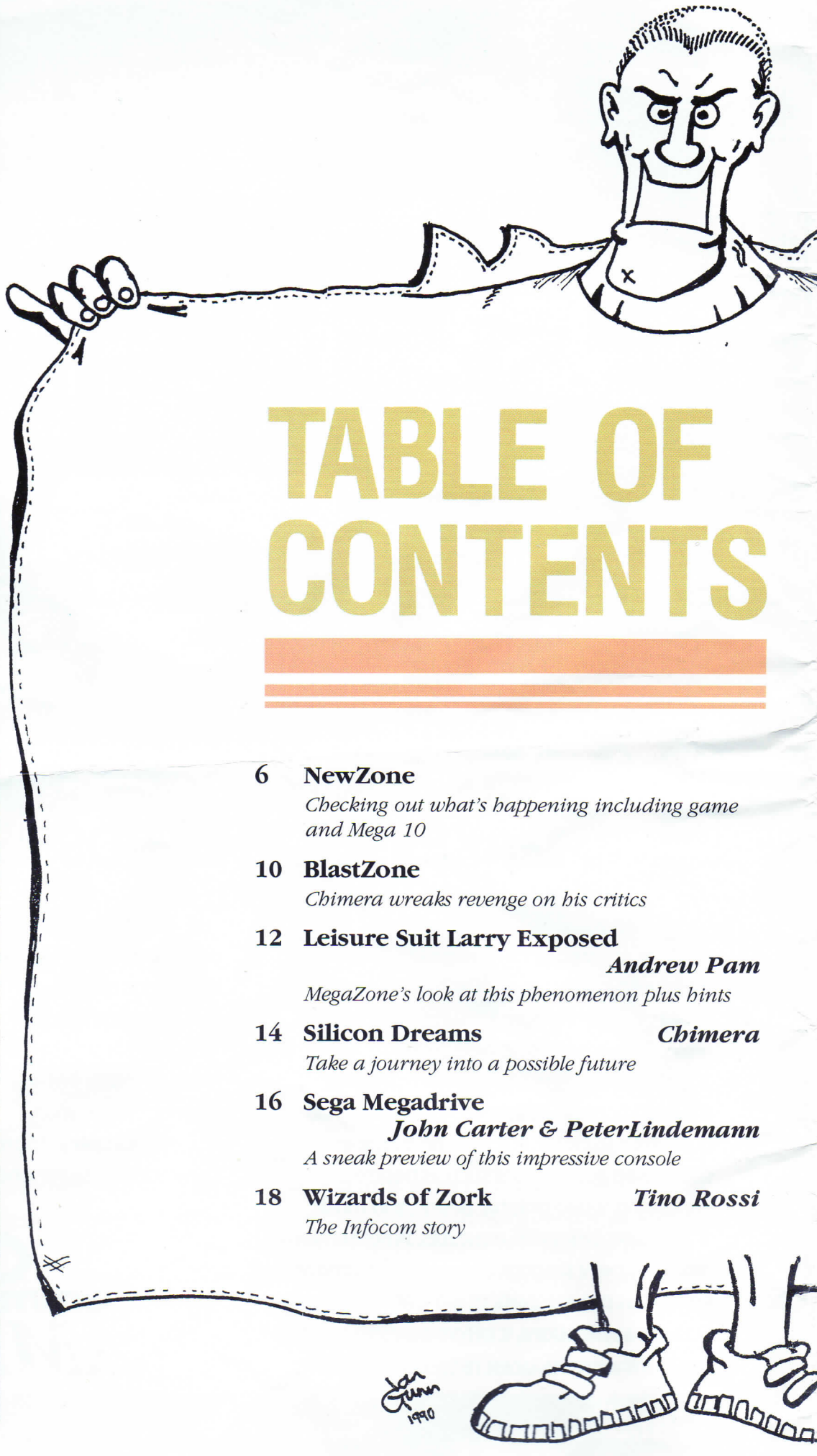
With this issue we are bringing you more *zing* for your money. Hope you don't go blind with our splashier use of colour and design concepts, but what the heck, you only live once. Games! Games! Games! We are listening to your pleas for more games reviews and look ma, more games reviews! And what about the snappy new name? Yes, I know some of you may be mumbling a little about yet another change, but hey, life is the spice of variety or spice is the variety of life or something.

And these changes are just the beginning. Keep an eye on us, we are certainly going places (no, not the looney bin, more like Mars). Further changes are in the pipeline which will bring MegaZone up to standards which should make the magazine more entertaining and addicting (Aaaagh, I've got to have my MegaZone fix). Most notably, our purported monthly mag will truly be monthly. Neat trick, eh?

Lots of new faces on staff. Most very nice to look at! The ever cute Katherine Phelps has taken over the duties of design and editing. The dashing David Marsh and jazzy John Ashton, street poet nonpareil, are now doing the typesetting and assembly. The amazing and incredible Ian Gunn, cartooniste extraordinaire is brightening up the pages with his astounding bits of humour. The alluring Adina Hamilton is decorating the office with her ever efficient presence. And a big hi to Tim and Karen in Sydney!

All right guys, doo-doo, doo-doo, you are now entering the

MegaZone. Enjoy!



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If you feel like taking a chance and waking up Boss during one of his rare sleeping-sessions, you may PHONE: 03-525-6369 or FAX: 03 525 6277. You have been warned, but Hell, who wants to live forever anyway?

NEWZONE

MEGA TEN

1 MID WINTER

This Blockbuster game of strategy sees earth in the grip of an ice age. The last safe refuge on earth is threatened by ruthless invaders. Your mission is to build up a force and repel the enemy. This game is absolutely huge. Am, ST

2 VENDETTA.

Smash, wham, pow! A personal vendetta is being waged against you (know the feeling, eh?) and it's time to fight back. This is a great game for getting out any aggro. Am, ST, C64

3 CONQUEST OF CAMELOT

Go back in history to the days of Arthur and the knights of the round table in this Sierra fantasy saga. ST, PC

4 PIPEMANIA.

A game in the tradition of Tetris. An ingenious game of building pipes in a race with time. Am, ST, PC, C64

5 CREATURE.

Alien fans beware! You have to shoot all the aliens before they reach the mother alien or the Polly Waffle hits the fan. Am

6 F-29 RETALIATOR.

You too can fly a futuristic fighter in this detailed flight simulator. Am, ST

7 ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK

This game is like one of those amazing Elvira flicks, if you've ever had the horror of having to watch Movie Macabre, lots of fun tacky gore.

8 E-MOTION

A puzzle game for the stressed (all here at Megazone), set in a world of atoms and par-ticles. Am, ST PC, C64

9 PLAYER MANAGER

Manage your team to victory, as you guide your soccer team through different games and tournaments. Has over 1000 players to choose from (wish there was an AFL version). Am, ST

10 CONQUEROR

World War II game of action and adventure. Test your leadership skills. Am, ST, PC

PALMS OUT, PLEASE!

Revolutionary new hand held games will soon be released in Australia by Atari and Nintendo. Unlike previous hand held games, the Atari Lynx and Nintendo Games Boy will feature television-quality resolution and interchangeable cartridges like their bigger brothers. We wonder how long it will take other companies to follow suit with similar machines.

❖

C64 MUTATES

Rumours on the grapevine say that Commodore is about to release a new games console based on their ever-popular C64 computer but presumably at a very competitive price. It should sell well, if the number of C64s bought for games is any indication.

❖

EVER DECREASING DISKETTES

We couldn't help noticing that 2inch diskettes have been introduced on a number of laptop computers. Looks like the trend for disks to get smaller and smaller over the years hasn't stopped yet! First there were 8inch diskettes, then 5 and a quarter inch, and then we thought 3 inch was as small as they would go. But hey, who knows, in 1995 we may all be using diskettes just half an inch in size! Stranger things have happened.

❖

VIATEL MOVES ON

Another interesting development was Telecom's recent changes to their Discovery service, previously known and loved as Viatel. They've made several changes, starting with introducing an 80 column text

mode and most importantly changing their pricing structure. Both consumer cost and the service provider cost have been raised considerably. These moves seem to be oriented to capturing more of the business market, but in any case are certain to hurt the home user, especially as a lot of the smaller service providers will be finding it very hard to justify staying online.

❖

CDI-THE LATEST

In Japan, home of computer innovations we westerners don't usually get to see until years later, CD games have been all the rage for a while now. Apparently the wily orientals have been testing hand-held games consoles based on CDI (CD - Interactive) technology, which allows, audio, video and program to be stored on the same CD. In a sample adventure game we've heard about you attend a concert by a popular Japanese female rock star, and the game actually includes a video clip of the concert on the CD!

❖

K-MART KOMPUTERS

It's finally starting to happen...computers are becoming just another home item like the stereo or the dishwasher. Stores such as K-mart are now selling computers, and companies like Sony have announced their intentions to produce TV sets that include a built-in IBM clone! Get bored with word processing your homework? Reach for the remote and change to channel two for Doctor Who.

❖

MUSIC ALA MODE

You can now get a plug-in card for IBM clones that provides, of all things, an FM radio - all you need is an aerial and a stereo amp, and you're away. Software is supplied so you can press a key and a window pops up to let you change the channel or the volume! No need to get up and walk over to the stereo. A similar card to allow TV and video to appear in a window on your computer monitor is also available, but is still very expensive, and it's currently being marketed for education and training uses. Rumour has it a similar unit will soon be available for Macs as well as PCs, and eventually we expect to see them on other machines such as Amigas and Ataris. After all, why have a television and a computer monitor when you can watch television on the computer? Or was that compute on the television...

❖

GET FLASHED BY BBS GAME

Currently addicting game players in Melbourne is a new item called "Flash Attack". It's for IBM or compatible users, and unlike the galactic BBS mind-bender, "Trade Wars" , "Flash Attack" is strictly for the earth bound. You run a military tank base on a mountainous island and your mission is to obliterate all other players' bases. The more crafty and treacherous you are, the more goodies you'll reap. All you need to play is your IBM or compatible computer, a phone line and a comms program. "Flash Attack" is available through the PC Connection BBS on (03) 388 0909. (Over 6000 Public Domain and Shareware programs are available.) Sysop Lloyd Borrett will be happy to fill you in on more details of the game or the BBS itself. Have a blast!

CONSOLE MANIA

It seems that 1990 is the year for the new game consoles. One of the newest is a hand held version of NEC's PC engine called of all things the Handy PC Engine. It's very similar to the Atari Lynx and the Nintendo Gamesboy in concept. NEC's other new console is the 16 bit Turbo Grafx; it has 512 colours and as an option of a CD interface which of course take CD game disks. It sounds great but the sixty four dollar question is when will we see it in the land of Oz?

❖

SEGAMICRO

Hot on the heels of the news of the Handy PC engine comes Sega's hand-held games console called the Micro Drive. It will have a high res colour screen and use Megadrive technology. This is one to watch out for.

❖

AMIGA CD?

Current rumour suggest that Commodore is working on an Amiga console with a built in CD ROM to drive the games. We are also hearing whispers that a CD ROM add on for current Amigas is in the pipeline.

❖

MEGAAMIGA

A Japanese company have a new device which allows you to download Amiga games into the Sega Megadrive. Cleaver stuff. HIYA! The only drawback is that its going to cost more than a new Megadrive.

❖

GAMES

Well another edition brings us news of another bag of games. Some might go on to be legends, others. . .oh well. Anyway here are just a few that will be hitting the streets about the time you will read this.

Knights of Crystallion

This game boasts many sub games where you gain money, develop psychic powers, develop mind powers and ride a crystal stallion.

E-Motion

Just the game to play after a stressful day. Enjoy the Fluid Motion of all the spheres as they make wild colours. . .cosmic.

Black Tiger

I was hoping this was a game about MY Fave Footy Team in fact its a game where you play the role of Black Tiger and he is into shooting up the bad guys such as trolls, vampire bats and other assorted meanies.

Warhead

A space combat simulation. Your job, if you should chose to accept it, is to rid the galaxy of any alien menace. No problem.

Mean Streets

Become the Dick Spanner of San Francisco in this highly detailed graphic PI adventure.

Welltris

As you might have guessed this game is in the style of the arcade hit Tetris. With more puzzles to keep your brain strained for weeks at least.

Bubble +

If you liked Bubble Bobble, you'll love this. A game of ghosts and soap bubbles.

Jumping Jackson

This is not a game about Michael Jackson on stage, but a game about saving the world from Classical music (do they mean the Doors?) and bring back Rock 'n' Roll.

The Toyottes

Is a cute platform game where you climb ladders, pipes and so on in order to rescue Barnaby, the king's son.

Space Harrier 2

More thrills and spills as Space Harrier ventures into dragon land for more action packed fun.

Space Rogue

Explore distant galaxies, battle enemy spacecraft, visit starbases across the galaxy, go where no man has gone before (not

the women's toilets) or woman for that matter (definitly not the men's toilets) in this space opera of epic proportions.

Hammerfist

This takes you to the world of the future where a giant coporation is trying to control things with the aid of holograms. You are two people in one fighting the evil corporation. As Hammerfist you fight with your trusty laser and as Metalisis you use your amazing speed and agility.

Vendetta

This is a game Arnie has been raving about with plenty of blasting and non stop action.

Day of the Viper

Armed as Viper V you attack a heavily armed alien base in this complex maze adventure.

TV Sports Basketball

Full featured Basketball simulation. Be just like Andrew Gaze.

Ski or Die

Hot on the heels of the popular Skate or Die comes Ski or Die. It is a winter sports game with events like aerials, snow board and so on. We wonder what they will come up with next; Beach Cricket or Die, Lawn Bowls or Die?

Defenders of the Earth

This features many famous comic characters such as Flash Gordon, The Phantom (and he doesn't sing any opera here) and Mandrake, fighting the evil forces of Ming the Merciless in this arcade adventure.

Blue Angels

This is a game for all you Top Gun junkies. You fly performing precision maneuvers in your F-18/PC, Amiga or ST.

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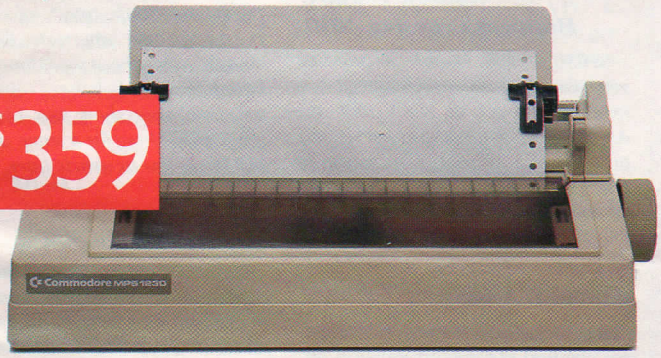
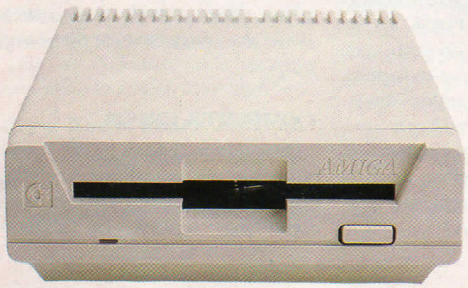


$359

Commodore printer. MPS1230.



Commodore C64 disk drive. Model 1541.
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$198

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Greetings! In his munificence, The Ed. has given me a new toy to play with... YOU. Yes, that's correct. I, Chimera, have a pile of readers' correspondance awaiting my pleasure. One thing that I have noticed, and that is the huge variety of writing media available. This amuses me no end. If I should receive a submission on something other than your standard paper, my mirth will know no bounds. Be warned, I will use anything soft and senseless in the most basic of biological functions. So There.

And remember what Oscar Wilde said about "Brevity". All offerings may be sent to:

MAILZONE, MegaZone Magazine. 1/40 Glenhuntly Road, Elwood. Victoria. 3184. FAX: 03 5256277.

BLAST

A500 SPITS CHIPS, USER TOO!

"Instead of gently and firmly pressing down on the chips to re-seat them, I've reverted to hammering on them with a small rubber mallet. If that's not a sign of desperation, I don't know what is really, that seemed to do the trick for a couple of weeks!. But just as things started to look like everything was right again, Whamo! -Drive starts spinning and screen goes white and imaginary voices from the Amiga haunt me with phrases like: 'Take that, Sucker...' or 'You didn't really think I was going to let you win that easily did you ?' ".

Andrew Leniart.
Hoppers Crossing 3030.

CHIMERA SEZ: Ouch! - Sounds like you don't need a techie, but an exorcist!. I'd get in touch with an Amiga User Group, and either nut the problem out, or march en masse to lynch the hardware designers. ...Me, I'll stick to my C64.

AMSTRAD ANGST.

Dear Megazone, "I am wondering if you can find out any information on the Amstrad 2086H PC with 20meg hard disk, because I'm having trouble keeping MS-DOS on it. I go through a procedure called called 'FDISK' and it says that if it comes up on such and such screen, you will have to format HD. I have done that a couple of times now, and wondering how I can cure it. Also, I am wondering whether the wrong keyboard may effect it, as I can't reset it with the keyboard, but have to turn it off and on."

Nicholas Delahunty.
Maffra 3860.

CHIMERA SEZ: Well, Nicholas; All I can do is give you the number of the Amstrad HELPLINE. 02 3832671. Maybe they can shed some light on your woes.

SMELLY BAUDS ABOUND.

"Yo, Megazone! About Avatar's 'On the Bauds' bit; It's not bad but the BBS's stink..."

MISTIK00L. 3131.

CHIMERA SEZ: Commodore User, eh?. Welcome aboard, matey. You're in good company with the Terrific Tricephale. (little "moi", of course!) Thanx for the alternate BBS list, though. Now, about the "Money" bit... hahahahahahehehehe... And no, time be runnin' short, Bro. 444 words is too damn long for a letter, already! Mebbe we use as article later, okay?.

RE: PETER McGOVERN

CHIMERA SEZ: Since you have requested me not to print your letter in context, even in judiciously edited form, I can't really answer your questions, as this would violate your express demands. I would recommend luring a bunch of experts over to your place, and slip them a Mickey Finn, then enslave them for your fell purpose.

COMPUTER CRISIS.

Dear Editor, "I wish to buy a computer for my grandsons, including printer. I have been told so many conflicting reports by different

stores in Melbourne; i.e games, colour, education, etc. as to who is the best. I wondered if you could advise me as to the most suitable for a 8 to 12 year old."

Mr. B. Swane. Brisbane.

CHIMERA SEZ: Hmmm. If we are to believe all that we are told by shop-keepers, we would be that much poorer for the experience. The only guidelines that I can give are: How much are you prepared to spend, what will it be used for, can it be upgraded to keep pace with the change of interests from playing to writing games, how much of what kind of software is available, and is the model tried and true in regard to sales popularity?. I can give you options other than Amstrad and Amiga: Atari ST, IBM-PC and all its imitators, Commodore 64 to name a very few. Let your path be guided by a trained computer salesperson.

HEAVY SIGH...

Dear MegaZone, "Someone tells me that you are run by some multinational software company. Is this the case?. -If it is, your reviews would be biased toward that company and its agents in Australia. Not a good thought for anyone wanting the best product, and not merely the most vocal. Please let all of us out here know whether you have sold out, because you've been pretty good so far, and I would hate to think that I've been writing to a sales catalogue.

Gary Waite. Unley 5061 SA.

CHIMERA SEZ: Gary, I wish we were, in some respects. Like, the "poverty" gig is okay for them as likes that sort of thing. Hell, I can't even juice up both tanks in the XJS some days. In answer to your question though, I would suggest looking at some of the warez we preview, and the scores given. We only review what software houses send us, and each item is graded according to its merit, or lack thereof. If there are any phantom software joints with hot warez, and in need of a sales shot-in-the-arm, I would suggest that they contact the Grand Poobah of PC's, Neddie Lindemann. -'Nuff Said!

RAD MAG, GAMES LAG.

To MegaZone, "Radical Magazine. Good to see an Australian Home Computer mag at LAST!. I've only got one gripe. Chuck out "HOW A PC". It is a waste of a page. Although you got lots of game reviews, how about an Adventure and Wargame section only?"

Peter Ferreira. Sanderson, N.T

CHIMERA SEZ: Funny you should mention the gaming thing... But, be charitable about "How A PC", okay?...There be people out there that need this stuff.

ENGINE DRIVER

To MegaZone, "I think your magazine is great! I am a console FREAK, with a Colecovision, Atari 2600 and a Sega Master System. I am planning to get a PC Engine, by NEC. I rang a few days ago, and NEC said to 'go and buy it from the UK, for we cannot help you.' I thought to my self 'what fools!'-The PC engine has sold over 1.5 mill. unit so far, and is beating the Sega Drive -Bit Sega by a narrow margin. – Could you help me out or send me some information on the PC Engine. I will be most grateful. Would you know if NEC are going to distribute the Engine, but are not telling customers. THEY WOULD BE FOOLS NOT TO".

Mark Boncordo. Doreen 3754.

CHIMERA SEZ: OK. As far as I know, NEC has no intention of marketing the Engine in England. You would be better approaching NEC Japan. On the whole, I would say "hang on" for a year or two, and wait for a game system that you can buy warez for. Chill Out.

MORE CONSOLE CLAMOUR.

"I was rather impressed with your magazine usually read the UK and US mags, but now I can really see that the Nintendo doesn't receive the recognition in Oz that it has in the UK and America. As a Nintendo owner, I reckon you should study this superb console a bit better, you will be pretty impressed. I would rather buy an Australian magazine than some Pommie or Yank crap, but until Nintendo appears in your mag, you won't be receiving my or my mates' money. p.s: Have a look at Zelda II and Super Mario II + some other new releases."

A NINTENDO LOVER.

CHIMERA SEZ: We are not doing this out of sheer bloody-mindedness. Y'see, we have to be sent programs to review by software houses, and in the case of these consoles; something to actually play the damn things on! I recommend that our readers picket their favourite software houses, and demand that MegaZone gets everything YOU want. howzat?. Support your Local Rag.

SPECIAL SEALED SECTION.

"Dear Sir, I think your magazine is great. A suggestion though – how about a pull-out section for hints, tips, etc.. I hate searching through past issues of my cherished magazines as they end up being torn and tattered".

Jason Odewahn. Mt. Pleasant 2519.

CHIMERA SEZ: Search your feelings, Ode-wan. There are many ways to get the best from your magazine. Buy two, cut one up as a scrapbook insert, and place all the "cherished stuff" in plastic bags. Folders are another way around the crinkled mags. Use little Force, though.

INTO THE WILD BLUE YONDER!

"I'm writing to suggest a new idea which could be used to, I believe, greatly boost the appeal of your magazine. The suggestion takes the form of a regular column devoted to flight simulators, with the inclusion of news, clues and reviews. I know of many and indeed, I am one of those people who immensely enjoy the challenges and rewards of good flight sims."

Garth Crawford. Griffith. 2603.

CHIMERA SEZ: Well People, what do YOU think?- Let them letters roll!.

ZONE

Leisure Suit Larry

Pirate versions of Leisure Suit Larry 1 caused trouble all over the world early last year when it was discovered that they were infected with a virus which, upon the player solving the game, retaliated by erasing files. Luckily no original versions were infected, so only people with pirate copies were affected. However, the virus made news worldwide due to the number of government and commercial PCs it attacked. Clearly, Larry was hugely popular among workers with PCs all around the world. Larry's earliest appearance was in 1987, when "Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards" was first released for the PC. The game allows you to live one night in the life of Larry Laffer, nerd turned adventurer, as he goes in pursuit of action, thrills and excitement. He's searching for the ultimate experience of his sheltered life, but he might not live long enough to enjoy it! In the 1988 sequel, "Leisure Suit Larry Goes Looking For Love (In Several Wrong Places)", he wins a million dollars and the dream vacation of his life... or is it?

Finally, last year saw the release of the third game in the series, "Leisure Suit Larry III - Passionate Patti in Pursuit of the Pulsating Pectorals". This time his wife leaves him, he loses his job, and he's back on the prowl for women. Eventually he meets Passionate Patti, the piano player at the local casino, dates her and falls in love.

Sadly, due to a terrible misunderstanding he decides to forsake the pursuit of women forever and disappears into the uncharted tropical forest on the island.

EXPOS

Meanwhile however, Patti has discovered that she has come to love Larry just in time to lose him. And so it is that in a first for adventure games, halfway through the game you

take on the role of Patti in her search for her true love Larry.

This is probably the most enjoyable game in the series yet. There are plenty of jokes and amusing events throughout the game and the documentation, and of course plenty of sex scenes! Not every puzzle must be solved to finish the game, but most are important. For example, at one stage Larry accidently ends up wearing Cherri Tart's Ziegfield Follies costume which, if he decides to keep it on while visiting his lawyer rather than changing back into his leisure suit immediately, will add a whole new dimension to his legal advice.

Another example is the marijuana scene in which Patti discovers the truth of Barbara Bush's famous quote, "Just say NO to drugs," in the silliest way possible.

The soundtrack to this game really adds atmosphere, especially the background music in the clubs and casino. On the PC an Adlib card or Roland MT-32 synthesizer are highly recommended for best enjoyment of the music. Keep an ear out for the musical gags! Keep an eye out for Elvis as well, as he has been rumoured to be alive and well and living in this game. Other Sierra characters also make cameo appearances to

humourous effect. The animation is outstanding as in most of Sierra's recent releases. Watch out especially for Suzi's skills with a paper airplane!

The author of the Larry series, Al Lowe, was a high school band teacher and school district administrator for 16 years. After going to a convention and seeing the educational software that was available, he decided he could write better. He designed a number of games for Disney, and when Ken and Roberta Williams of Sierra Online saw them, they hired him to work for them designing educational software. Since then his games have become very educational indeed!

In addition to PCs, the Leisure Suit Larry series is also available for the Atari ST, Amiga, and Macintosh. The original game is also available for the

Apple II and IIgs, but Sierra are unlikely to release the rest of the series on the Apple. They have, however, released Leisure Suit Larry T-shirts and towels! I wonder if there's any chance of a Leisure Suit Larry IV in time for Christmas this year... and whether there's any truth to the rumour of a Leisure Suit Larry movie?

Patti's Hints to Larry

PASSIONATE PATTI'S HINTS FOR LEISURE SUIT LARRY III

Larry: How can I score with Tawni?

Patti: Give Tawni what she wants. She wants your credit card. You haven't got one? Return to your former home, open the mailbox, and get the mail.

Larry: I don't have any souvenirs to sell. Where can I find a souvenir?

Patti: Make one! Pick up a piece of granadilla wood in the jungle (it's under the granadilla trees) and carve it into a primitive erotic sculpture. Your dull ginsu knife probably needs sharpening on some concrete; try the Casino steps. You'll also need to cut some grass just outside of Chip 'N Dale's and weave it into a grass skirt. Change in the cabana to disguise yourself as a native.

Larry: How can I score with Cherri Tart?

Patti: Give Cherri Tart what she wants. Cherri Tart wants to live on a farm, however, she has no land. Give her your land deed. If you don't have a land deed, offer her some land ANYWAY, then go get that deed!

Larry: Where are the law offices of DeWey, Cheatem and Howe?

Patti: The easiest way to find the law office is to go to the scene outside of Chip N' Dales. Go South from this scene until you change screens (you will enter the forest scene where the granadilla grow). Now go North immediately.

Larry: The maitre'd won't let me in to Cherri Tart's show!

Patti: You need to tip the maitre'd. If you don't have any money, you will have to get together with Tawni. You also need a Show Pass. The pass is in the documentation that was included with your game. Type "show pass" when you're with the maitre'd (EVEN IF YOU DON'T SEE IT IN YOUR INVENTORY). The maitre'd will ask for a show pass number. The number is on the ticket on the page he mentions. Enter the number on your pass.

Larry: I need help scoring with Suzi of DeWey, Cheatem, and Howe.

Patti: Give Suzi what she wants. The first thing she wants is your money, after all, she IS a lawyer. You can earn five hundred dollars by dancing at the casino in Cherri Tart's Ziegfield outfit. You need to score with Cherri to get in the outfit and dance. Be SURE to wear the outfit when you return to the law firm.

Larry: You won't date me. Why not?

Patti: Have you given me your divorce decree from Dewey, Cheatem, and Howe? Next, you'd better use Suzi's spa membership card and go for a workout at Fat City! Afterwards, go to the beach where you met Tawni. Spread out your towel, lay down, and catch some rays.

Larry: Which locker is mine? What's the combination?

Patti: The locker number is written on the back of Suzi's spa membership card. The locker is on the right-hand side at the end of one of the maze paths. Try typing "find locker" for some guidance! Look up the advertisements for the three businesses written on the back of Suzi's spa membership card in your handy Nontoonyt Tonight Guide. Write down the page numbers that the advertisements are on. That's your combo.

Larry: How do I score with Bambi?

Patti: Give Bambi what she wants. She wants some help with her video, but she won't be interested in you until after you've done your workout... and don't forget to take a shower afterwards! Deodorant might be a good idea, too.

Larry: I'd like to shower but I can't find any soap!

Patti: Get the soap-on-a-rope that is hanging above the sink near the cabana. And if you don't know where your towel is (shame!) take a look on the beach after Tawni has left.

Larry: You want a gift for your first date. What do I give you?

Patti: I want a lei. Stop smirking! Pick some fresh orchids from inside the cave near Chip 'N Dales, and make a lei.

Larry: I need a bottle of wine. Where can I get one?

Patti: Grab a bottle of wine off an empty table at The Comedy Hut. If you can stand it, sit through Paul Paul's entire repertoire to catch his amazing impression of a duck!

SIL

THE ILLUSTRIOUS CHIMERA TAKES A NERVOUS LOOK INTO HIS CRYSTAL BALL AT THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME. . .

Well. Here we are in the 90's already. Yes, I know that the "biggy" is still some ten years away, but to paraphrase Tom Lehrer, if you are going to write about the future, you'd better start now!

"Replacement surgery and nonoelectronics go hand in hand creating an expanded human potential,"

I apologise only slightly for the inaccurate science behind any of my hypotheses; after all, an idea has to start somewhere. . . That somewhere is quite possibly somewhere in the realms of Gibson or Moran, and a host of Johnny-Come-Latelys. . . Let's call it "Chiba City" in a wee salute to the Gibson fella.

Chiba City is a seething mass of humanity; some of it more so than the rest. Replacement surgery and nanoelectronics go hand in hand, creating an expanded human potential, where none previously existed. The air seems to crackle with the conflict of electrons, supercharged Kirlian fields, and of course, our old friends: Poverty and Hopelessness. These time will never erase and there will always be some spiv to grow fat on that. It's the way of the world. Kill or be killed. Only the means of doing it change, with the motivation remaining static.

THE JOB SITUATION

The job situation will not have changed, people have not been replaced by machinery, but have taken a back seat to the action. The status of "Increased Leisure Citizen" is a wry joke smeared on the faces of millions; they eat, sleep, reproduce and consume. That's it. Or is it? Among the masses, there will be many discrete cultures, gangs and other social groupings. People must be occupied, even in this postulated Hellhole. The "Glass Tit" will pacify most, as it has done since the 1950's and for some that will be enough. The screens will either be of the wafer-thin CCD type, holovision or totally screenless. I imagine that nanoelectronics would make it possible to beam television signals into a headset that uses the visual cortex as the "screen". The most serious objection would come from the owners of television stations. Imagine the tantrums when they are told that they can only show programmes, and not "program" the audience. . . With television "in mind" (sorry!), the topic turns to computers and gaming.

I imagine that nonoelectronics would make it possible to beam television signals into a headset that uses the visual cortex as the "screen".

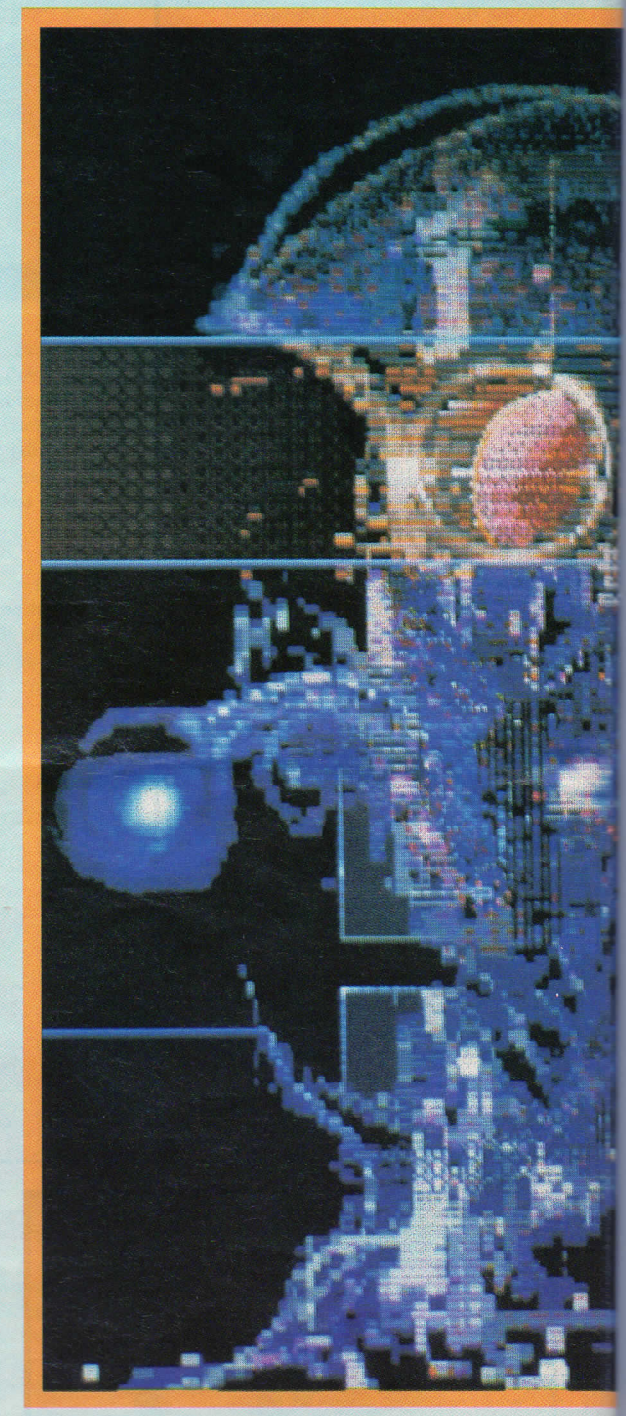
COMPUTERS AND GAMING

Video games become "Head Games". A gamer would probably look like someone in serious trouble. He/She/It would spasm, grimace, duck and weave to the scenario played out in his mind, looking not so much as the person "in control", but more like an epileptic. Naturally, the player would have to be in a "controlled" situation, a parlour, if you like. The software for these games could either be generated by the arcade machines and transmitted to the headsets, or take the form of something similar to ROM packs which are rented out for the duration of play. Depending upon how "deep" the game penetrates into the mind, there may have to be limitations placed on the amount of time spent playing. Much has been said about ESB (wireheading) and it doesn't look promising. In one test, rats were given the choice between pressing levers for either food or a stimulation to the pleasure centres in their brains. Needless to say, but I will anyway, the researchers found themselves picking up dead rats with strange smiles on their faces... (the rats' faces that is!)

Other potential hazards would include the ubiquitous glitches and stuffups that we all know and love today. Consider the prospect of a vidgame going "phhptt!" in the Old Grey Walnut. . .not pleasant.

A SOCKET IN YOUR HEAD?

These software packages would have to be very delicately



ORD

CYBERWARE

programmed, and interfaced in the most sanitary way possible, considering that one bad gamechip could ruin your whole day and scramble a few zillion neurons in the process. I would imagine something like an inductive system as being the practical solution where the receiver is surgically implanted under sterile conditions, of course. The signals would be transmitted through dermal electrodes to the receiver. In this way there is no danger of something icky ending up in your second favourite organ. The idea of having a 6-pin DIN socket in one's head sounds appalling, and has far too many drawbacks to be practical. Maybe some "backyarder" would do it that way, but leave that to the Wireheads.

A more serious use of Biowares would include the possibility of acquiring skills in a previously unknown field, and then being able to use them. This would tend to blow the job market wide open. Open, that is, if there were any spare ones to be had! The true currency would have to be even less tangible than our present standards: INFORMATION!

WHICH BRINGS US TO HACKERS

Gibson wrote of "Cowboys", a special breed of hacker, using mind/computer interfaces called "Matrix Simulators", which allowed them to perform their hacking runs on a more "personal" level. The simulator, or "deck" would allow the operator to perform operations in Cyberspace, courtesy of some nifty electrickery and the agility of the human mind. The information network is displayed as a grid, with databases appearing as geometric solids. These bases would have some form of security, most commonly known as "ICE", Intruder Countermeasure Electronics. Nasssty Ssstuff, Preciousss. . .

Okay, that all seems to be stock-in-trade for the writers of Cyberpunk and all it implies. Consider the hazards of being a Webdancer, Cowboy or whatever. Yes, there would be the possibility of getting fried by the resident AI, but even more danger comes from outside the Matrix. As with most horrors, they all have that charming touch known as "human nature", and we all know what that can do, don't we? Computer viruses would become the biggest bogey of all when you consider what some of

> "If a cybervirus were used on a human jacked into the system, he would... either speak in tongues or go catatonic until "debugged".

the more fiendish ones of today can do! If a cybervirus were used on a human jacked into the system, he would "live in interesting times", as the Chinese sometimes say. In short, the dancer would either speak in tongues or go catatonic until "debugged". A really nasty virus would quite literally "crash the system". Ick.

THE PRACTICAL SIDE

The practical side of it would eventually surface. With such destructive capacity available to all, a sense of moderation would descend over the scene. Loons would not survive very long, and stupidity has ever been its own reward. Let them eat baby food.

As for the games that could be played on Cyberware, basically they would be the same as the ones we have now. The very first game to come out will be "Pong", possibly at a crippling price, even to those who can afford it! Marketing would have to be carefully watched, to prevent the sly sods slipping subliminals into the

> "Marketing would have to be carefully watched, to prevent the sly sods slipping subliminals into the games themselves."

games themselves. Further advances would include Full-Sensory Display, which again should be carefully scrutinized before release. It would not look good on the tombstone: "It was only a g-aarrch!"

Of course, if the game had rotten sound and graphics, you would only have yourself to blame! I bet Leisure Suit Larry 25 could be quite interesting, though. See Ya on the Grids, Kids!

AWOS

SPECIAL PREVIEW

PETER LINDEMANN AND JOHN CARTER CHECK OUT THIS IMPRESSIVE NEW CONSOLE.

Each day seemed like an eternity. I kept asking myself "when will it arrive?" Driving to the post office became a part of my daily routine. Day after day anticipation turned to the words "Sorry, not here yet," began to echo through my head until one morning I stepped back in disbelief, a large box was slid across the post office counter towards me. I hurriedly scrawled my name beside the cross, tucked the box under my arm and raced back to my car. Yes, it was here. The MEGADRIVE had arrived!

A short time later with the MEGADRIVE wired up and myself crouching in front of the television, stereo headphones clamped about my head with volume turned up, I loaded the cartridge titled: ALEX KIDD. My head began swirling. The music that pumped into my head was breathtaking. I heard voices that my ears told me were real. Suddenly an axe-wielding fiend appeared to leap from the screen at me! I couldn't believe that this was merely a computer game!

The Sega MEGADRIVE looks outwardly much the same as any other video game machine in that it hangs off the television with joysticks trailing out and a game cartridge pushed into an appropriate slot. The machine, however, is not like any other. Its graphics are genuinely arcade quality being limited more than anything else by the quality of the screen used and not by the machine. With moving backgrounds that simulate depth and excellent digitised voices - notably one particular evil laugh - ALTERED BEAST on the MEGADRIVE was so much like the arrcade version that the most significant difference was not having to keep feeding 20 cent pieces into the machine!

Regardless of your taste in arcade games Sega seem to have just the thing for you and your MEGADRIVE. Really, this isn't surprising. Next time you venture into one of those game arcades play a game of "spot the Sega logo." You'd have to be blind to lose. Apart from the usual "shoot 'em downs" and "blow 'em ups" such as SUPER THUNDER BLADE and SPACE HARRIER II there are sports games and even role playing games.

PHANTASY II is such a game where the player ventures out into the world on a great quest. There are towns to visit, people to talk to, places to buy armour, magic spells, weapons and other goods; and of course there are monsters to battle. This particular game cartridge is unusual in that it has battery backup so a quest can continue for longer than a single sitting.

For the strategy minded, Sega have released SUPER STRATEGIC CONFRONTATION which is a brilliantly executed war simulation game for up to four players. The only problem I had with these two games, particularly PHANTASY II, was trying to read Japanese! (Serves me right for not waiting for English releases.)

Now finally to the machine itself. What makes it tick? The Sega MEGADRIVE is the world's first "game console" (fancy name for "home video game machine") with a 16 bit processor. More remarkable if true is the rumour that the MEGADRIVE operates with two hundred and fifty-six thousand (256,000) colours!

A 9 pin "D" connector on the back of the machine when connected to a modem will enable two players to play simultaneously with certain games. Underneath the MEGADRIVE is an expansion port to connect interesting items such a CD-ROM unit, a light pen or conventional computer keyboard and disk drive.

Sega has obviously used the expertise that has helped it to dominate the arcades to create an amazingly powerful yet affordable machine. Having seen the new Sega MEGADRIVE it is little wonder that all fifty thousand (50,000) game consoles released for sale in Japan were sold within two days of hitting the shelves.

P.S. The MEGADRIVE is being sold as the GENESIS MACHINE in the USA.

侍 SWORD OF THE SAMURAI™

The strange samurai awaits you outside the gate. You bow to each other, then draw your swords. You can tell by his stance that he is a master of the blade.
Kai Province
TAKEDA Clan
SHINGEN Daimyo
4200 Koku
32,000 Troops
HOSTILE
You are at the castle of Lord Kimasaka. Despite the exquisite gardens and the impeccable manners of the courtiers, you know the castle is a hotbed of intrigue. You decide to
* Announce your readiness to defend the clan's honor.
* Tell the daimyo your samurai are eager for battle.
* Visit someone.
* Leave.
* Wait till night, then quietly leave your room.

The place: 16th century Japan. You are a Samurai, a warrior who lives for honour. Your world teems with opportunities to achieve it . . . or lose it. The ultimate honour – to become Shogun and unite all of Japan under your rule – is a prize worthy of only the greatest of Samurai.

Action, adventure, historical accuracy; Samurai advances the gaming genre MicroProse pioneered so successfully in Pirates!

Available for IBM PC and compatibles.

MICROPROSE
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

The Wi

INFOCOM HAVE BEEN INNOVATORS IN ADVENTURE GAMES SINCE THE EARLY DAYS. VALENTINO ROSSI CHECKS THEM OUT.

Zork: a simple, four-letter word, but mention it to some people and they will rave on to your for hours about their battles and trolls, flirting with deadly grues or their endless wanderings through frustrating mazes. Of course, I'm speaking of the all-time classic all-text adventure game which first appeared under the banner of "Personal Software" over a decade ago at a time when the original Crowther and Woods "Adventure" (upon which Zork is closely fashioned) had sprung onto an unsuspecting world.

The name "Personal Sorftware" soon passed into history however, and the name by which everybody knows this game, and all its sequels and descendents is "Infocom." Infocom did not invent the text adventure game, but they did refine and enhance it, and made it commercially viable to the point where their name is synonymous with this genre of computer game. (An adventure game is one where the player takes on an alter-ego, the main character in the game, and attempts to guide him/her safely and correctly through a series of puzzles set up by the programmers of the game). And justly so, I feel, as they have lifted it to a near art-form and each new Infocom adventure is always eagerly awaited by millions of hungry fans.

ONCE UPON A TIME

When Zork first arrived on the scene, it did not have terribly much over the original adventure apart from the fact that it would allow full sentences to be entered as commands, rather than just two-word noun-and-verb commands. Perhaps this reason alone, along with the fact that there was no notable sequel to the Crowther and Woods epic, is why Infocom rapidly soared to almost God-like proportions in a very short time. Zork II and III were not long in following the original and the legend of Infocom continued with these two exdcellent games.

With each new Infocom game, the standard continued to rise. Better command parsers (the section of the actual computer program which tries to "interpret" the commands which you type and act upon them accordingly), quicker program response and even tougher puzzles to solve all served to add to the success of these games. Infocom even began publication of a regular newsletter called THE NEW ZORK TIMES which gave subscribers advance notice of upcoming events and games, amongst many other things.

The success of the Zork series spawned an entire range of text adventures under the Infocom label, and not just fantasy, but also science fiction, mystery and tales of adventure. One of the first of these non-Zork titles was Suspended, an epic science fiction adventure where the player took on the role of a type of cyborg (in this case, basically a mind or brain supported in an immobile life-support structure) which in turn has control over five robots within an underground complex. Each robot had essentially just one sense such as hearing or sight (apart from the ability to move about the complex and communicate with you) and it was up to you, the player, to give these robots the commands necessary to the continued smooth-running of the complex which incidentally, controlled the entire outside world. Not an easy task in itself, but when a couple of mysterious outsiders are (unknown to you) sent down to disconnect you and shut down the complex, things get decidedly more complicated. This is just one example of an Infocom game (and still one of my personal favourites), but it shows the brilliant thinking behind the games.

NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE SUCCESS

Many other titles followed. Here is a very brief summary of some of these. Deadline: a whodunnit where you play the part of the detective. This game amazed me at the time with its exceptional standard of character interaction. Planetfall: another sci-fi title which follows the exploits of a lowly deck scrubber who gets shipwrecked (or space-shipwrecked if you prefer) on an unknown planet. The Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy: from the trilogy of the same name, which closely follows the storyline of the Douglas Adams novel whilst adding more than a few new touches. A Mind Forever Voyaging: another very unique science ficiton adventure. This time you play the part of an intelligent computer program, projected into a simulated future time in order to "experience" first-hand the effects of a massive project which implemented at all, will hopefully give the Earth a future to look forward to.

There are many more great games which I could have mentioned but these should serve to illustrate the wide range which the Infocom adventures present. They are also separated in levels of difficulty (Introductory, Standard, Advanced and Expert) in order to give beginners and advanced adventurers alike an equal challenge, rather than being ridiculously simple or frustratingly hard. To use the previously mentioned games as examples, Suspended and Deadline are both Expert level. A Mind Forever Voyaging (and also Zork II and Zork III) are Advanced, while Zork I, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy and Planetfall are all Standard level (which is still quite difficult).

Wizards of

MORE THAN JUST A GAME

To many people, adventures are more than just games. They can project you into worlds which can exist only in the imagination, in much the same way that a good novel will. But with adventure games, you have the power to control the way in which the protagonist arrives at the climax of the story, and it is through using your wits and powers of reasoning that s/he arrives there at all. With all-text adventures, the world in which the adventure is taking place is also wholly within your mind. Through the excellent descriptions given in the text, you build up your own idea of what things, places and people look like. That is why it has always been sacrilege to ask whether Infocom will ever begin producing graphic-adventures (adventure games which not only give written descriptions of the current situation, but also provide a picture of many of the scenes).

Up until recently, if anyone had asked me whether or not Infocom would in fact produce anything other than all-text adventures I would not have hesitated in saying no. Perhaps this is because I am a purist, or because my fondest memories of adventure games are from the dim, dark ages of computers when graphic adventures would have been a joke. Or perhaps because when pictures are provided it gives a standard image to everyone who plays the game, rather than allowing them to conjure up their own (much richer) mental picture. But as long as Infocom continue to produce their excellent "traditional"-style adventures, then I guess that we will at least have a choice between one or the other. Another item worth mentioning at this point is sound effects. I first came across this phenomenon in Infocom's Sherlock and the Riddle of the Crown Jewels, but fortunately the sound can be turned off when desired, which makes it no more than a minor annoyance.

PLAYING THE ROLE

Fairly recently Infocom has also begun producing a range of Role Playing Games (RPG's) which owe nothing whatsoever to their humble ancestors and are a genre in their own right. The only example of these RPG's which I have experienced is Battletech. I understand that there is a TV cartoon series upon which a real (non-computer) role-playing game was based, upon which in turn the Infocom one was based.

Battletech is a graphics-based game, but it is not a graphic adventure. Most of the screen is taken up by an above-ground view (almost like a map) with you at the centre, and this is the playing area in which the game takes place. The playing area is much larger than the screen however, and while your character remains in the centre the surroundings move in response to your movements. The game revolves around the use of enormous robots called Mechs, which are piloted by one or more people and can be enhanced to massive proportions with heavier armour, more speed, better enhanced weaponry, etc. Battletech has a few surprises and innovations, but I think it's just a starting point for Infocom RPG's and I'm sure that sequels will prove to be very popular in their own right.

To confuse you even more, with the release of Beyond Zork Infocom have blended their traditional text adventure with elements of RPG's by giving the main character in the game hit-points and attributes. Another thing that Beyond Zork will do is create a map for you as you progress; something which has long been the bane of text adventurers (and, some will say, one of the most enjoyable parts of the games). A prequel to the Zork trilogy called Zork Zero has also been released, but as yet I have not been fortunate enough to have played the game.

PRESENTATION POW

One last thing that I would like to mention about Infocom games is nothing to do with the games themselves, but the way in which they are presented. For years, Infocom games have been packaged in a way which has left other software houses for dead. With each game you will get, in the beautifully-presented box, an assortment of items pertaining to the game itself. Most are usually not necessary in solving the game, such as the pocket fluff and peril-sensitive sunglasses which are provided with The Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy or the plastic "stone" in Wishbringer. Others will be essential to the game such as the "Class One Security Mode Access Decoder" in a Mind Forever Voyaging. This last item, and similar items in other Infocom games are more for a piracy deterrent than anything else, making it much more difficult to use a pirated version of the game.

That just about wraps up my brief history of Infocom and their brilliant games. Remember this was written from a personal viewpoint, and is not meant to be a detailed blow-by-blow of everything they ever did and I apologize if I have neglected to mention certain items which you may feel are important.

To anybody who has had no exposure to Infocom games, or to adventures in general (particularly all-text adventures) I suggest you go and buy a copy of thge Zork trilogy. Infocom sells Zork I, II, and III in a single package and is well worth it as these are the true classics of their genre. An even better idea might be to buy one of their Introductory level games, which will still give you hours of thought-provoking enjoyment.

CHIMERA BEMOANS THE EXPENSE, BUT FORKS OUT THE BRASS ANYWAY. – OH, FOR A WORKING VERSION OF "BURGER TIME"!

Video arcades are here to stay. At least until the "Powers That Be" decide that they cause everything from Autism to Zoophilis, and all ills between. There is something about the money-making ability of these places that suggest that "Organised Crime" might be interested, and this may explain a certain squeamishness on the part of various governments. Oh, well...Until then, they're a part of modern life, and how they are used is the affair of the individual, and it ain't my duty to condone or condemn. So there. Enjoy all, but be cool about it, Okay?

The first true "videogame" was called PONG. This was invented in 1972 by an American, one Noland Buschnel, the founder of Atari. As a result, the console games hit the market. Yes, this was the genesis of the venerable 2600, and a host of limitations. But this is not our interest at this point.

Apart from PONG, the grandsire of all other games would have to be Taito's SPACE INVADERS, launched on June 16, 1978. Boy, what a year that was! Remember, at this time, there still existed such a thing as "Pinball Parlours"... (Memories...). True, we still have pinball machines, and quite clever ones at that! In Japan, the habit seems to be a game called "Pachinko" where the ball is flipped vertically into pockets, with the machine being bolted to the wall like a medicine cabinet.

This is more of a gambling game, and it has not changed too far from its original form "BAGATELLE", first described in 1836. The source? "THE PICKWICK PAPERS", by Charles Dickens. (Sort of "respectable", almost.) This turned into the familiar pinball machine in the 1930's, courtesy of Richard T. Maloney of the Bally Corporation. Isn't "History" fun?

AND THEY'RE OFF AND RUNNING...

Progress waits for no-one, least of all , the Japanese. Within months of SPACE INVADERS "working" across millions of screens worldwide,

a swarm of imitations and refinements slathered the market. Some names are still around: Atari, Namco, Nichibutsu, Tahkan, Taito, Midway... At this point, it was an open market, as the public wanted more than

Pong and Invaders. The graphic quality left something to be desired, and the sound effects, well...! All up, there was no real criticism. This luxury is reserved for the jaded gamers of today. Many companies fell

ARCADE ACTION

by the wayside, and the product quality bears testament to the power of "Competition".

When I was both young and charming, I would think nothing of blowing $20.00 in one night. Yes, I know that it may sound a paltry sum now, but consider the machines that I was playing! PONG, INVADERS, ASTEROIDS, SPACEWAR, DEPTHCHARGE... Just imagine what it was like in COLOUR!

Ahh. That is the crucial thing. From Blobs to vector-graphics, to solid 3D. The early colour games were very strange things, usually straight shoot-em-ups with no random event generators and blocky graphics, but a fun way to waste time and money! To catalogue them all would be pointless, but please join me in a stroll down Memory-Chip Lane...

PLEIADES, GORF, BATTLEZONE, CRAZY CLIMBER, DONKEY KONG, CENTIPEDE, ASTRO BLASTER, MOON BUGGY, SKY RAIDER, WIZARD OF WOR, PHOENIX, PAC MAN (!), BERZERK, ARMOUR ATTACK, SCRAMBLE, DEFENDER, MOON CRESTA, SPACE FURY, MISSILE COMMAND, SAVE NEW YORK!, GUNFIGHTER, RALLY-X, MONACO GP, STAR CASTLE, STARFIRE, MAGIC MONKEY, POOYAN, KANGAROO, TORPEDO, SUBROC-3D, 005, TAZZ-MANIA(1), GYRUSS, TERRA CRESTA, JUNGLE HUNT, CIRCUS CHARLIE, LUNAR LANDER, TEMPEST, TARG, et hoc genus omne.

If I have neglected to name any favourites, even the obvious ones, please forgive me. The games may change names, but many were rehashes of other concepts. The dizzying pace of change means that quite a few have carried over from a gentler, more cultured age. (!)

COME INTO MY PARLOUR

Video Parlours proliferate. In certain areas, they spring up like mushrooms and vanish faster than parking spaces. To most parents, they are characteristic of all things "Nasty". The general trend is to wallop the skin off the kids and cross themselves at the mention of these places. In some cases, this is a good idea. There have been reports of juves ripping off any close source of money to help support the video habit. This includes doing their own folks over. Chimera is displeased, and will not tolerate this behaviour in any form. Got that, kiddies? If you must vid-blitz, do it with your own cash; besides, it acts as a limiter. Habits are meant to be broken. END OF SERMON.

Any connection between drug-use and games is purely accidental. After all, there are limits to what scores you can rack up when under the influence of "recreational chemicals", and to quietly get a totally different "score" in a Parlour? - Get Real...! In all my years of Arcading, I have yet to be approached by the Ol' Dope Peddler, and have seen nothing to suggest his existence. Check the schools a little more closely, guys.

The games themselves are staggering. What was once a series of barely-controllable blobs is now a sleek starcrusier/jet/car or whatever. The controllability varies, but the scope has blown the mind of many a fragile soul. It is hard to actually pin the most popular type of game, since it is a case of "Different Strokes for Different Folks", and the variety available makes a joke of the idea.

To be a successful arcade game, the product must have a "grab and hold" factor. Vivid graphics and a distinctive sound track are an extra bonus. A few years ago, people were exposed to a game called ASTRON BELT. This was unique, due to the fact that it was on Laserdisc, and had a pixel-ship superimposed on an animated background of "film" quality. This was a high-tech version of the early "Gunfighter" interactive movies. ASTRON BELT begat other incentives, the most noteworthy being DRAGON'S LAIR and SPACE ACE. These are still around, if you care to look hard enough, as are most of the games that I have mentioned. Treat yourself to some Realtime history.

Shoot-em-ups are by and large the most numerous. Even the hoary SPACE INVADERS has been through various makeovers and tart-ups. The most bizarre variant that I have seen is called EXERISER (sic.), and has your craft besieged by winged Amazons trying to charcoal the luckless pilot. Sounds straight, but the catch comes when it is time to retaliate: They are only vulnerable when their legs are open (!). (Gee, I wonder why they took THAT one off the market?). I suppose that this owes more to GALAZIANS than INVADERS, but who can say? Other variants have some gimmick, such as HALLEY'S COMET, and thus are only a topical oddity.

FROM SPACE TO TERRA FIRMA

As games became more sophisticated, the command chain diminished. What was once a fighter with track on air support, is now the single unit with power-ups. The tank becomes a semi-naked lone gunner. The trend is to get the action down "mano a mano", and very bloody it is. I suppose that this is to assure short player life, and subsequent turnover.

The idea being to totally swamp the defender with sensory overload and zorch him quickly. The addictive quality of these is enhanced by the "CONTINUE" prompt, and the mad scurry to feed the coinbox. Most embarrassing.

On to current games, and not a few oddities with them. If you want to meet new friends or make new enemies, then GAUNTLET or XYBOTS is the answer. For a real mindbender of multiplayer mayhem, why not try OFFROAD or if you can find it, XENOPHOBE. These games place from two to four people cheek-by-jowl, and lay the performance open to merciless scrutiny. Firstly, check who you happen to be playing with. If they are the "Uglier" type of biker, someone munching a souvlaki, a cigar smoking pseudo-Cowboy or Japanese Businessmen with Missing Fingers, my advice is this: Experience some motor disorder attempting to insert your coins!

IMPORTANT SAFETY TIP: There are no heroes on the other side of the screen.

ARCADE ETIQUETTE

Even if you have a machine all to your lonesome, ignore the adenoidal advice from the eight-year-old at your elbow. Why? He wants a game, and by the Lord Harry, he'd want to zorch your arse off the console. He is the sort that can barely reach the M-10, but can blast his way through OPERATIONAL WOLF or MERCHANISED ASSAULT better than Sly or Arnie could welded together! Let him wait a while, ultimately it's good for him. Oh, and on the subject of waiting: there is an etiquette to be observed. Do not crowd the poor sod already on the machine. Look at the console. There will be either coins sitting on the flat spaces, or credits racked up. Be patient. If there are no coins visible, place your stash on the console, without interrupting gameplay, and stand back. I have seen bloodshed occur over little niceties being flaunted. You have been warned.

"Kibbitzers" are a problem. To this end, I would suggest the cabin-simulators, such as TOP LANDING, OUT RUN, AFTERBURNER, THUNDERBLADE, or such like. Anyone that gets too close MIGHT stop the hydraulic action of the cabin, and its wild gyrations are a damn fine incentive also. Do not be afraid to sweat profusely during a spin in these doohickies, as no-one will notice until you step out. I actually prefer to stand while playing. This is partially due to the overwhelming stench of fear and other such products that may end up in the cabin. The more realistic sims can do that to some.

My favourites are: CABAL, RASTAN, CHERNOV, ROBOCOP, R-TYPE, ROAD BLASTERS, XYBOTS, GHOSTS 'N' GHOULS, ALTERED BEAST (of course!). GRYZOR, GAUNTLET I &II, RAMPAGE, STAR WARS, TETRIS, EXERION, GOLDEN AXE, OPERATION THUNDERBOLT, HEAVY BARREL, BUBBLE BOBBLE, QUARTET, 1942... And whatever else is coming onto the market! Call it a weakness of mine, but I still enjoy the gritty-get-down feel of an arcade, especially after slaving away at a regular job. To be sure, it is slightly irresponsible and widely escapist, but who the Hell cares?

THE FUTURE

With games coming on the market so quickly, do not be surprised to discover a different game to that advertised on the cabinet. With the average machine selling at a bottom figure of 15k up to 60k and beyond, board-swapping becomes a viable alternative. Many places start that way, with one or two machines, and the boards are swapped, dictated by the popularity of the game. With the profits realised from the initial machines, others may be bought. "From little acorns, mighty Oak doth grow".

So, where will it all end? The sky is the limit apparently, the greatest limiter of all being the capacity of the human mind to absorb data and convert it to the appropriate action. It is imaginable, in a not-too distant future; Holographic games, Sensory Enhanced systems and the ultimate trip: Direct Input, where the mind provides software and playing-field. Skill Chips could be around the corner, in a little shop in good ol' downtown Chiba City.

CHASE H.Q.

ocean®

Swords &

THROW DOWN THAT BROOM, PETER CHIN-QUAN, AND PICK UP YOUR SWORD. YOUR DESTINY AWAITS!

Life for many of us is fairly mundane. Our surroundings are familiar and seldom change. The same can be said about our weekly routines. For some what lies ahead is another week at the office or perhaps the shop floor. A cluttered household in need of cleaning awaits others. Maybe you'll spend your days in a classroom either at the front being harassed or in the crowd being bored to tears. At home things are a bit better, sitting in front of the television or plugged into the stereo listening to something everyone else in the house thinks is obnoxious. Still, everything is painfully ordinary. Looking out into the back-yard you see the dog pulling sheets off the line again while an inattentive member of the family is trying unsuccessfully to light the barbecue. You shake your head in amazement wondering how anyone could have trouble turning on a gas burner and dream of the days when mankind (or is that people-kind or person-kind? Ouch! Didn't dodge that magazine quick enough) faced "real" challenges.

This is where many of us turn to the realm of fantasy and make-believe be it in the form of a book, a movie or increasingly these days "a computer" adventure. For a time we let our imagination take us to a world where none of the rules that control our normal lives apply. There are no rules of conduct or behaviour, no constraint of time and space; not even the rules of science and reality need apply. In this world lust, greed and aggression are allowed a free hand to go beresk (sic). Civilization as we know it can be substituted for anything imaginable. Magic, creatures and entities of any description could be the norm. The final say as to the way of the world is left to the weaver of the tale.

Armour

While most of us are quite happy to be led; to be shown the way, told what to think and what to do there are some among us who strive to forge their own path. Such people have been known to sacrifice much; well paid jobs, careers and even marriages to express their creativity. Creativity is life-blood. To be given strict instruction is a death sentence to the soul. To such people the unfolding of an adventure - merely to read, watch or listen - is not enough; the urge is to be the creator!.

Many of us wishing to create an adventure have enthusiastically shuffled our seated bottoms into close proximity to our beloved computer, favourite beverage to one side and fingers poised over the keyboard only to be stumped by the ultimate question; "How do I start?" The answer is actually quite simple and has got nothing to do with computers at all. Take that favourite beverage to a quiet comfortable place, sit down with a note book and contemplate. Let your thoughts wander (above the belt-line) and think about the place that lives in your imagination. Think about the lay of the land; is it a featureless sand-swept desert beneath a scorching sun or a cold, damp city-scape of steel and concrete?

In your mind's eye explore the place as you would if it were real; "look" at your surroundings, "smell" the air, "listen" to the sounds. Try to imagine what perils (or pleasures) may lie waiting. Take notes if you "discover" any particularly interesting places. The idea is to develop a "feel" for the place. It's no good trying to write an adventure set in ancient Rome and not have any idea what sights or sounds the adventurer will come across. All this day dreaming might seem like a great waste of time but in the long run it could help spawn an adventure that is "alive". If it's not real in your own mind it won't be real to others.

Stage two in creating the greatest adventure ever written is to sit down once again and think of a story line or plot. To begin with, adventures generally need a goal to work towards. If for example your chosen world was the ever popular dark ages complete with fantasy items such as a dragon or two, witches, goblins and so forth, you could have a princess in need of rescuing. This example isn't what you'd call particularly original but for the purpose of the exercise it will do. An alternative could be a rather inept prince who's somehow got himself into big trouble.

Keep in mind that adventurers put a lot of time into an adventure so they tend to get very annoyed if the prize at the end of the "GREAT QUEST" proves to be an anti-climax. A pat on the back in the form of a screen that says "congratulations, you have completed the quest" with perhaps some flag waving or fire-works won't do these days. Those sort of games tend to have their disks nailed to the side of the outside toilet to be used for archery target practice. Put yourself in the shoes of the adventurer and use some imagination to think of a worthwhile prize as a reward for the effort given.

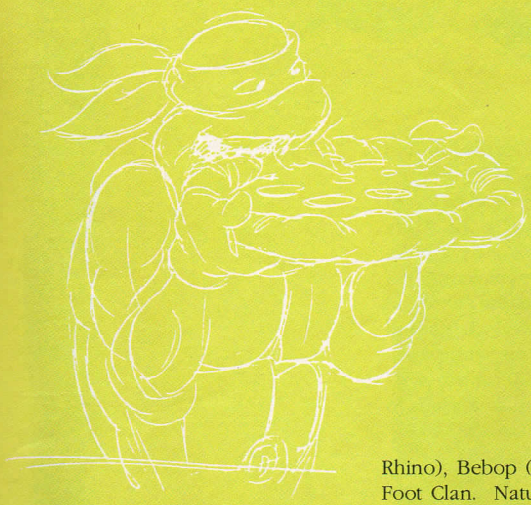
Starting at the end of the quest and working backwards often gives the quickest results when it comes to developing a plot. This needless to say is everything that happens between the start and the end of the quest. This is where the day-dreaming proves its worth. The distressed royal individual is probably locked away in a little room either high up in a tower or deep within the bowels of a castle. Access to this room could be via a maze of little passages guarded by numerous locked iron gates and heavily armed soldiers that are built like the proverbial brick sh-t house. There are probably lots of dark and dingey rooms scattered about, some not having seen candle light for years.

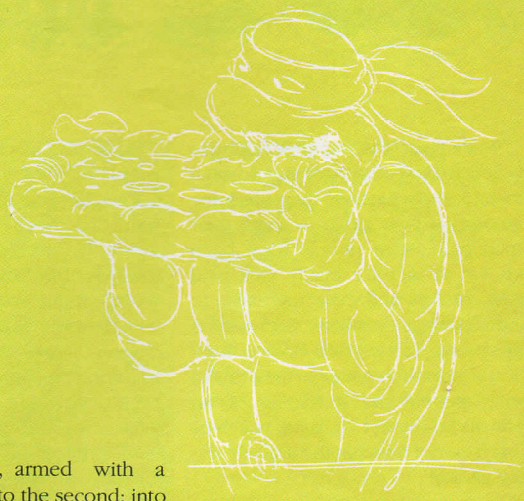
One such room could be an old disused laundry. Hidden beneath a thick mat of cob-webs might be an old drainage grate leading to the castle sewage system.....sitting by a quiet stream in deep contemplation the adventurer is disturbed by the sound of footsteps running towards him and the squeaky voice of his young assistant, "Master! Master! Terrible news!" The adventurer sits up and listens to the news. "I must get into the castle," he says to himself, "but how?"

The next stage in creating an adventure is to work out in detail how the adventurer is to achieve the goal. If there are locked gates there must be a way to get a key from somewhere or it must be possible to sneak through the gate under certain circumstances. A point to keep in mind at this stage is try not to make tasks to be done by the adventurer too cryptic or obscure. It might seem very obvious to look under the rock that's sitting at the base of the fountain to find the key if YOU put it there but if you didn't the key might never be found! A better place to put a key is on a hook on the wall of the guard room; certainly more obvious and potentially more difficult to get!

Adventurers like their cunning to be taxed to the fullest. It is a lot more satisfying to steal a key from under the nose of a guard than to find it through pure luck. Many adventure games have ended up being little more than over blown cross-word puzzles. One pet hate of mine is to have worked out how to achieve a task but find myself unable to do so until I can find exactly the right word. Try to plan into the adventure variations in the plot. The appeal of an adventure game is to BE the adventurer in a story. If the adventurer wants to, it should be possible to climb into a cottage through a window and not just through the back door. It all adds to the believability and hence to the enjoyment of the adventure.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES





WHAT HAS EIGHT LEGS, EIGHT ARMS, AND EATS PIZZA?

What has eight legs, eight arms, and eats pizza? Come on guys... My six year old nephew knows THAT one!... The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles! With a smugness born of the wisdom of years, and a warped sense of humour, I have known about these dudes for years. The comic books by Eastman and Laird are fairly spiffy, with just the right combination of action and off- beat humour. As is the case with all sucessful products, the spinoffs have arrived with a vengeance! The comic begat the fuzzy toys, which spawned the action playsets, bubblegum, cartoon series, film and video game. Released by Konami, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles allows up to four players to recreate all the fun and mayhem. A little background if you please: the Turtles were mutated by an alien substance, courtesy of T.C.R.I., alien castaways trying to find a way off Earth. The Turtles are found by a rat called "Splinter", who also mutates on contact with them. Splinter picked up the art of Ninjitsu from his late master, and the Turtles became Splinter's pupils over the years, to finally combat Shredder, leader of the Foot Clan... Confused? Don't sweat it. The Turtles: Leonardo, wielding twin Katana leads the group; Michaelangelo twirls Nunchaku and pigs out on pizza; Donatello has the Bo (quarterstaff); and Raphael gets his kicks with Sai. The Villains: The Shredder, Rocksteady (a mutant Rhino), Bebop (a warthog) and the Foot Clan. Naturally the TV series differs from the original version, including new characters, and ignoring others. The game seems to strike a balance between the two. First scene has the Turtles pitted against the Foot, while trying to rescue April O'Neill. By judicious (and rapid!) use of the Fire and Jump buttons, and massive amounts of joystick wrenching, April's apartment can be cleared. Rocksteady the Rhino is the end-of-level ugly here, armed with a machine gun. On to the second: into the streets. Molto Mayhem, Dude. From memory the next scenarios are: Sewers, Junkyard, Bridge... about then, I ran out of money. Yes folks, it's one of THOSE games: the ones that allow one to feed them with coins until entropy sets in, or at least sheer physical exhaustion! I can vouch for the addictive value, Feek and I played it for around twenty five minutes, and felt like we'd just done a few rounds with the Shellbacks themselves! Maybe it was our karma to run out of the twenties, Grasshopper. Graphics are clean, with a "toonish" quality, action is fast, smooth, and mondo furioso. The game starts with the boppy TV soundtrack and title shots. The Turtles are on top of a building, just in time to see April's apartment catch fire. With a rousing, yet incomprehensible yell of "COWABUNGA!", they leap into the fray! Energy levels are replenished by grabbing pizzas (naturally!), and these start to appear around the second level. The attacks are quite frequent and varied, but scaled to the number of people playing at the time. A nice touch. Vocal interjections add humour, and there are hints popping on screen if your character becomes trapped or generally hassled. I liked the rocketboard sequence; the Turtles are on rocket-propelled boards, fighting Footsoldiers in gyrocopters...Sound whacky? - Fer sure, Dude....

Megazone Scoreboard

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

GRAPHICS:	10
SOUND:	8.5
ACTION:	10
MENTAL ANGUISH:	5
LASTING INTEREST:	10

A Shell-shocked CHIMERA.

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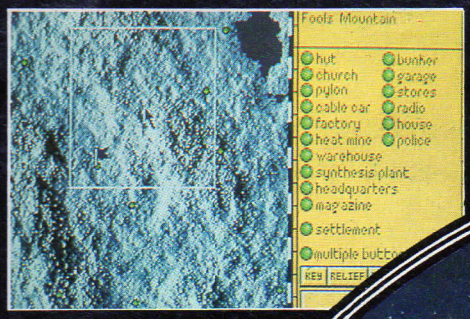


RAINBIRD

MASTER OF STRATEGY

THE STRATEGY GAME

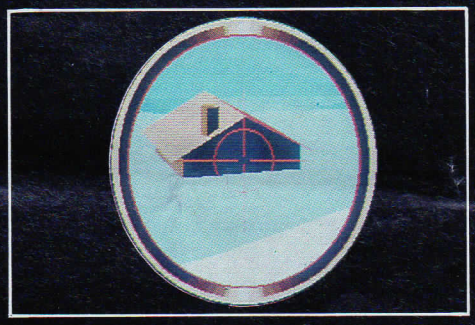
MIDWINTER

OF THE DECADE ARRIVES

As a new Ice Age dawns in Rainbird's gigantic new classic, strategy gaming also enters a new era. For Midwinter is a genuinely original concept that launches revolutionary techniques onto the home computer screen.

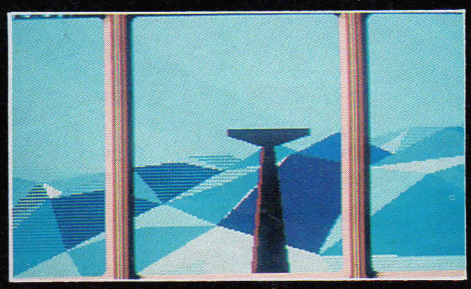
The scenario is convincingly realistic as a new Ice Age grips the world. Together with a small group of pioneers you have colonized the Midwinter Isle, a 160,000 square mile land mass now under threat from invaders intent on seizing your sanctuary.

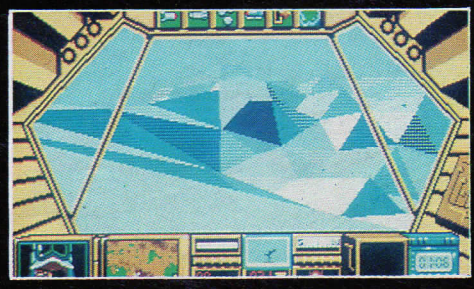
Compelling action and strategy take place across a spectacular 3D fractal generated landscape with its stunning geographical accuracy. You control 32 personalities, each with different qualities, skills and complex personal relationships. Enemy movements can be tracked, and battle plans made, using the incredibly detailed on-screen map.

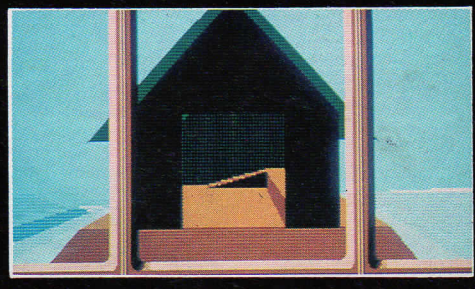


In your bid to defend the life-supporting heat mines, you can ski, hang-glide, travel by snow buggy or cable car, snipe and sabotage the enemy. There is no easy way to win, but the game's unique depth and absorbing complexity will keep you trying until you do.

The deep Midwinter is upon us. Be prepared for a long and exciting battle against its elements.







MEGAZONE

Elvira

Aussie Games

The Untouchables

The Jetsons

Beverly Hills Cop

Iron Lord

Moonwalker

Chase HQ

Arthur

Power Drift

Dragon's Lair II

Sword of the Samurai

Power Strike

Towel of Babel

Cyborg Hunter

Wild Streets

Casino Games

Creature

Galaxy Force

ARCADE

ELVIRA

Valentino Rossi doesn't know just where to look. – I have a few hints, old chum.

If you're a late night T.V. viewer and/or a "B"-grade horror movie addict, chances are you've come across a daemonic-looking, generously-endowed woman with a fetish for black leather, draped over a sofa while introducing the late late horror film. To everyone else, meet Elvira, some thing of a cult figure in the United States, and undoubtedly not without the odd fan here in Australia, she's been involved in a number of things in both T.V. and movies and, you guessed it, she now features in her own computer game.

Here at Megazone we took a look at the Amiga version (other versions include Atari ST, IBM, and C64 disk) and just between you and me this one could raise the eyebrows of a few jaded gamers, especially action/adventure fans. The people we can thank for inflicting Elvira onto the computer world are Horrorsoft, whose claim to fame so far is a rather unique graphic adventure called Personal Nightmare, making this just their second major release.

The name of the game is "Elvira, Mistress of the Dark" (from the movie of the same name, starring Elvira in the flesh), and it's a multi-disk animated graphic adventure with arcade sequences throughout and "full four channel" sound (Amiga and Atari St versions), including some excellent mood music and Elvira's own digitised voice. Most of the screen is taken up by the main graphics window, which displays what you can see, and each location is very nicely drawn indeed – up there with the best of them.

Panels of icons allow mouse control of such things as weapon selection and inventory control, and the player's character's attributes (strength, dexterity, experience, etc.) are also shown. In the usual fashion, the player must move around the area – in this case a creepy house, underground dungeon, and more – solving problems, searching for items, and dealing with encounters with vampires, murderers, and so on... the usual run of the mill stuff for adventurers.

With Mistress of the Dark, Horrorsoft claim to have "broken new ground" in gameplay and presentation. That's probably a wee exageration, but there's no doubt that the boundaries of what we should expect in a game these days have been pushed back just a little bit. As I've said, graphics, sound, and music are very good, and there is a generous amount of animation (some of it very effective!) and more than a fair share of gory scenes. It takes something out of the ordinary to make me look twice these days, but there are a few scenes which may elict the odd groan of disgust – there's no shortage of blood and guts here, folks.

An added bonus to the game is real-time battles with full sized animated monsters to the sound of appropriate hacking and slashing noises, though I wasn't able to test these out so it remains to be seen just how effective they are. "Elvira, Mistress of the Dark" seems to be a cut above your average adventure, and I for one will be on the lookout for it. Let's hope it lives up to expectations.

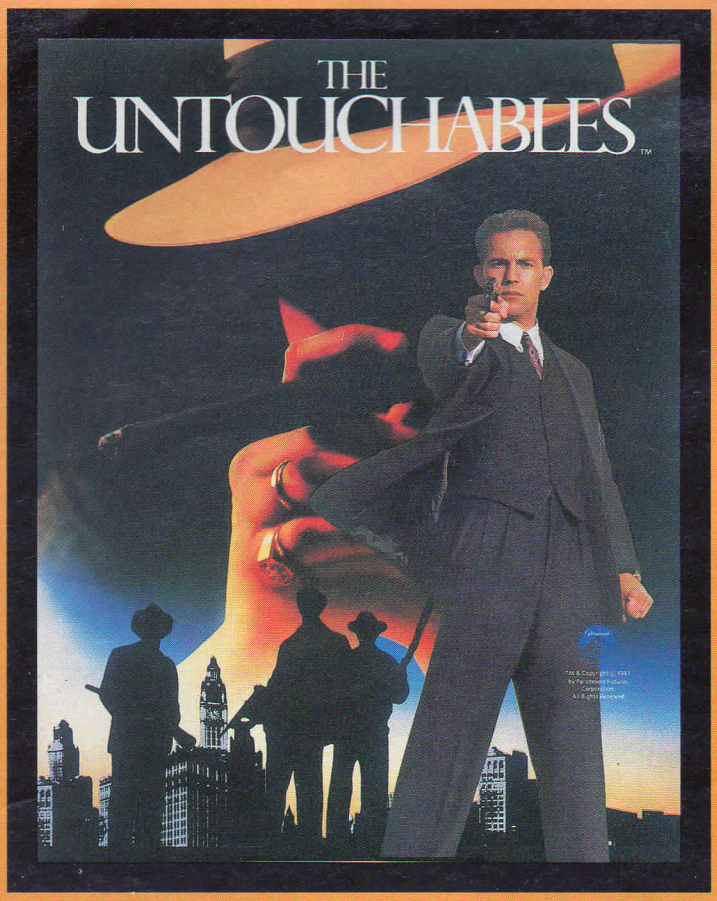
Tino Rossi

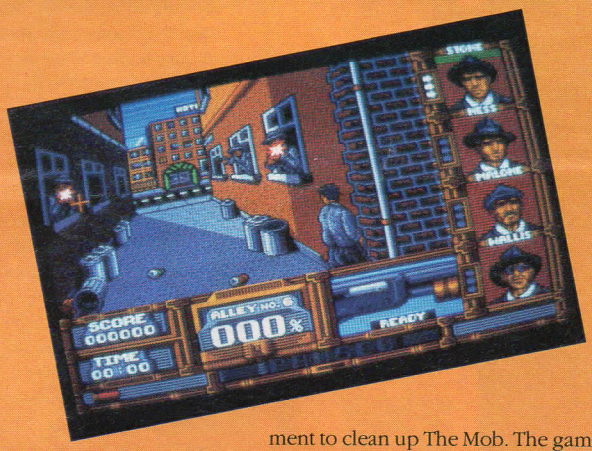
MegaZone Scoreboard

ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK

GRAPHICS:	8
COLOUR:	8
ACTION:	7
SOUND:	8
DOCUMENTATION:	7
MENTAL ANGUISH:	8
LASTING INTEREST:	7
VALUE FOR MONEY:	8
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	76

Reviewed on :	Amiga
Also for :	Atari ST, IBM, C64 disk
Software by :	Horrorsoft
Distributor :	Questor
R.R.P. :	**$89.95** (Amiga)





CHIMERA DOES CHICAGO.

Now listen, Sweetheart... Da Boys want a piece of da action, an' dat means either play ball wid us, or wind up wearing' a paira cement galoshes. Dis Elliot Ness guy is puttin' da heat on our ginmills, an' dat means he's gotta muscle in on your little operation ta stay even. Got dat, or do I send a torpedo ta give ya da Deep Six?

....Whew!.. It's kinda (sorry!) hard doing that Mobspeak, and I don't know whether I "pulled it off", or just read like ol' Arnie. Either way, that's just my little way of getting into the mood for this honey of a game. For those of you too young to remember, Elliott Ness was a Treasury agent in the '20s and 30's, hell bent on bringing Al Capone to Justice. Ness and his men were known as "The Untouchables" for reasons other than poor hygiene; possibly something to do with their methods and extended power granted by the U.S. government to clean up The Mob. The game is in six sections: Warehouse, Bridge, Alleys, Train Station, Hostage and the Rooftop Shootout. Level One, The Warehouse, is as far as I could progress, what with such a tight review schedule... (Claws unsheath in a meaningful manner, small wisps of flame dart around bared teeth...)

Graphics are brilliant, and all figures are given almost excruciating detail. A jazzy soundtrack helps maintain the illusion of the Roaring Twenties, but I think that a spin of "Friends of Mr. Cairo" would be more the ticket for the serious gamer. The Untouchables "in toto" are used for some scenarios, and should be kept intact for certain sections of the game. Energy levels are indicated by an Elliot Ness Icon, which changes into Scarface Al, wielding a baseball bat, should energy fall too low. (Chimera's research: Albert Anselmi and Johnny Scalise were beaten to death with the bat on May 7, 1929, at Capone's HQ: the Hawthorn Hotel, Cicero (Chicago suburb) by Capone himself. Nasty.)

Other scenarios involve controlling one or more of the Untouchables to achieve the end result. The instruction sheet gives all control methods specific to the scenario, and even in Italian! On first impressions, I would suggest that the game be included in the collection; especially if you have seen the series and want a little nostalgia, or to bring the film tie-ins up to date. Grab some Chanti, scarf down some Spag Bol, and blaze away!

Oh, an' by da way, youse guys...Rememba ta let da good guys win, Capisce...?

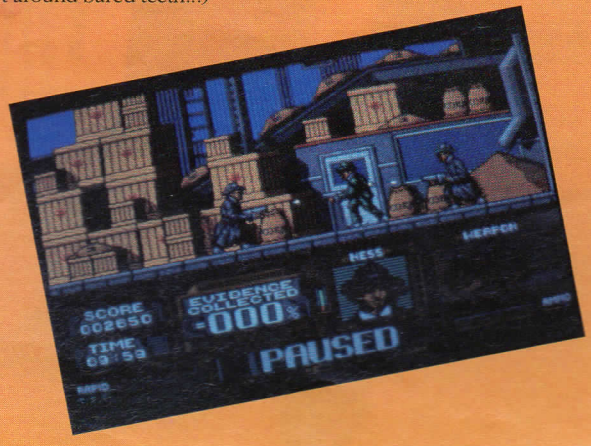
MegaZone Scoreboard

THE UNTOUCHABLES

GRAPHICS:	10
COLOUR:	8
ACTION:	8
SOUND:	10
DOCUMENTATION:	8
MENTAL ANGUISH:	7
LASTING INTEREST:	10

Ya betcha life, Sweetheart!

VALUE FOR MONEY:	8
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	90
Reviewed on:	Commodore 64
Also for:	PC, Amiga, Atari ST
Software by:	Ocean
Distributor:	Ozisoft
R.R.P.:	**$99.95** (Amiga)



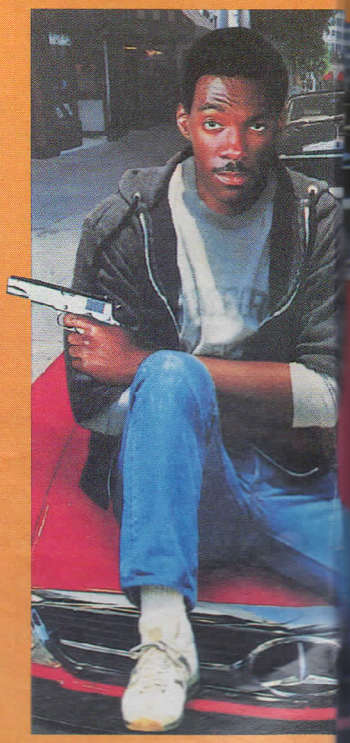
BEVERLY Cop

VALENTINO ROSSI IS NOT AXEL FOLEY, BUT AXEL WISHES HE WAS!

The movie Beverly Hills Cop has been around for a few years already (not to mention the fact that the sequel to it has come and gone) but Tynesoft have just come out with a great new game based on this hit Eddie Murphy film. Was it worth the wait ? The following is based on the Amiga version.

The game is structured around four of the main events from the movie, so I'll describe each one in turn. I'll assume a familiarity with the movie, but even if you haven't seen it, you should understand what I'm talking about. The main character, played in the movie by Eddie Murphy, is Axel Foley.

The first stage takes place in the warehouse where an arms deal is supposed to be taking place. It's up to Axel to make his way though the warehouse, fighting off gun-toting gang members with his trusty .45 automatic. The baddies also have dynamite and some sort of land mine which has to be shot at from a distance to explode it so that you can walk past. The degree of control that



you have over Axel is excellent, if a little hard to get used to. He can shoot in about 10 different directions from a standing position, and a similar number from a crouching position, and he can also duck to avoid flying bullets. You have a time limit in which to make it to the despatch depot, and three lives up your sleeve.

After successfully getting through the warehouse, you then have to chase the three trucks which managed to be loaded with the arms before you could get to them. Luckily you have a sleek red Mercedes convertible to do it in....When I first got to this section of the game, it really blew me away because it just happens to contain about the best driving simulator I've seen on the Amiga so far!! I don't think I'm exaggerating by saying this, because it really is like a simulator, with real-time, solid 3D graphics including other cars, trucks, buildings and trees, not to mention the crates which are unloaded into you path by the escaping criminals. The graphics are quite fast and reasonably smooth, and I think a good game could be built around this one part of the game (well, I'd buy it!)

The third stage involves overcoming the guards and fortifications of Mr. Big's house, the head of the operation, Axel can walk around the garden or shoot as he pleases, even pick up a machine gun if he's lucky enough to find one. What can I say, I didn't get to this bit, so you'll have to find out for yourself!

Finally, in the fourth section, you've made it into the actual mansion where Axel must fight his way past more guards and find Bruno Bardolino, not to mention that he has to rescue as many hostages as he can. Apparently Mr. Bardolino has a bomb which he has threatened to set off if he is found, but you can't think about this too much if you're going to complete your mission.

Graphics are generally above average, especially the car chase which is excellent (I think that the Amiga version, and possibly the Atari ST version are the only ones with the 3D graphics, so don't be too disappointed if your's doesn't have it! That alone is the main reason for the score of 9 I've given the graphics). Animation of the characters is somewhat better than the usual fare, which is a pleasant change. There are also many excellent pictures scattered throughout, such as at the start and the end of each stage, whether or not you are successful.

Sound effects are quite all right, the best being the start up music which is the theme from the movie (Axel F). One tiny hitch is that you need to turn the volume way up after the first part, otherwise you won't be able to hear the sound of your car in the second part...

In play, Beverly Hills Cop is quite addictive, and has three levels of difficulty to keep you going. And if, say, you get through the first part but fail to get through the second, you have the option of replaying the one you've just attempted.

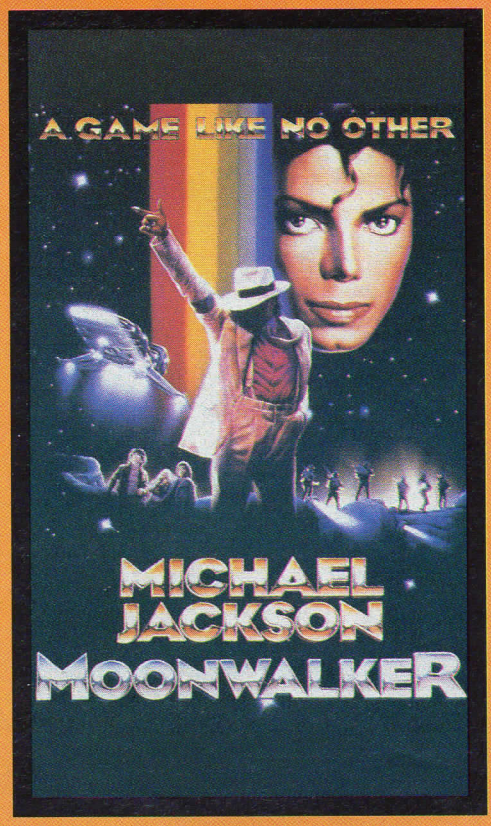
This is definitely an above average game, and although there are only four stages to it, with three levels of play it should keep you challenged for quite a while.

Recommended.

MegaZone Scoreboard

BEVERLY HILLS COP

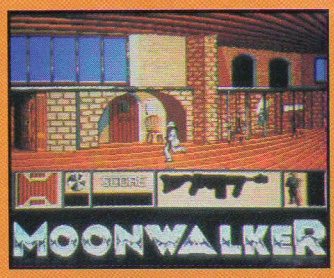
GRAPHICS:	9
COLOUR:	8
ACTION:	8
SOUND:	6
DOCUMENTATION:	
ANGUISH:	5
LASTING INTEREST:	8
VALUE FOR MONEY:	7
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	72.5
Reviewed on:	Amiga
Also For:	C64 Disk & Cass., Atari ST, IBM 5.25"
Software by:	Tynesoft
Distributor:	Questor
R.R.P.:	**$49.95**



PETER PAN O.D.S ON "CAPTAIN EO" WHILE DRESSED AS BUGS BUNNY. ADAM SVENSON IS HAVING A PROBLEM WITH REALITY.

Moonwalker the game is based on Michael Jackson's film of the same name. The game starts at a film studio where desperate fans flock to find our hero Michael. Your job as Michael is to avoid the fans and pick up various pieces of a disguise which of all things is a rabbit suit. The game uses an aerial view at this point as you scramble around passageways to find the suit. After you find the rabbit suit it's on to the next location. Here you have to escape on a motorcycle with your rabbit suit. Your arch enemy, Mr Big, is after you cutting roadblocks to hassle you. You must ride around to find orbs (well that's what they call them in the instruction book!) which change your bike into a sports car which has no trouble blasting through the roadblocks. Then if you manage to get through the roadblocks you will arrive at Club 30. Mr Big's thugs follow you there. You have to move Michael through passages collect ammo and shoot Mr Big's henchmen. This is very strange as you can't lose a life but instead you lose a platium disc. You can't lose a life because Michael hates violence but he has no worries about blowing away Mr Big's thugs...I think there is a double standard there.

Kate who is not a chimp. When you go to Mr Big's lair you are confronted with more thugs and Mr Big's plasma gun. Your job is to kill the guards, destory the plasma gun and rescue Kate. Moonwalker is a fairly easy play and gets a little tedious after a while. The levels are interesting but there is a lack of gameplay to keep you coming back for more. The graphics are fairly good and the animated scenes are well handled. The sound's ok if you like Michael Jackson's music. While Moonwalker is not a bad game it seems to lack the gameplay to make it a hit.



MegaZone Scoreboard

MOONWALKER

GRAPHICS:	7
COLOUR:	8
ACTION:	6
SOUND:	7
DOCUMENTATION:	7
MENTAL ANGUISH:	5
LASTING INTEREST:	5
VALUE FOR MONEY:	7
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	59
Reviewed on:	Atari ST
Also for:	Amiga
Software by:	US Gold
Distributor:	Ozisoft
R.R.P.:	**$49.95**

Tower of Babel is an intricate 3D strategy game involving an interconnecting network of towers, platforms and lifts all rendered in solid 3D with innovative light and shading techniques. Take control of robot spiders and program them to solve problems and puzzles and interact with other creatures, such as Pushers, Zappers and Grabbers. Alternatively, real time control is available to you at any time for instantaneous reaction to the game's developments. For the more adventurous among you, there is a complete game designer, allowing the construction of your own series of towers, platforms and lifts. Attempt to fox your friends with your own fiendishly difficult creations. More than just a game, more than just a puzzle – Tower of Babel is a whole new concept in strategy gaming.

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MICRO SPACUS

POWER DRIFT

CHIMERA CLIMBS UNSHAKEN FROM THIS TWISTED WRECK.

Power Drift is just the thing for all the budding petrolheads out there.

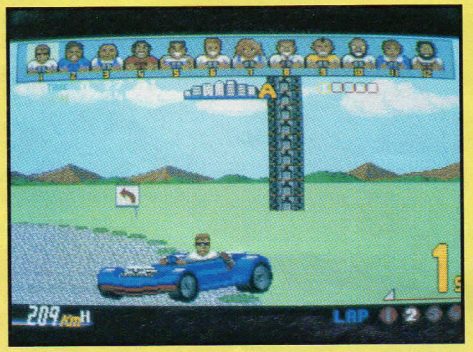
Like most race games, there is a choice of circuits, including some night driving, with the only twist being that it is possible to choose from twelve drivers.

...Just what difference this makes, I cannot say. The graphics are very "Sega" being chunky and somewhat ill-defined. Sound effects are lacklustre, but this is to be expected, considering that the Commodore version is not multiload, and uses a significant amount of memory to run the graphics such as they are...Truthfully, I don't like car-racing simulations of any kind, and this just doesn't "cut the mustard" as an enjoyable addition to the already-tired genre.

The arcade version is far more "visually exciting", as is the case with most micro conversions. I would hazard a guess that the Amiga and ST versions would more than come up to scratch, and possibly be more enjoyable to play.

Gameplay for the 64 version is spartan. Joystick steering, and the fire button to toggle gear changes, all two of them. Animation of the track is just this side of jerky to make it annoying. Opposition vehicles are easily overtaken, and the only skill lies in being able to stay on the track, which incidentally appears to have been designed by VicRoads, all switchbacks, lumps and sharp turns to make the Victorians out there feel right at home!

I feel a wee bit guilty about not liking this game. Okay, it is supposed to be fun to drive around in a supercharged buzzbox, lair-arsing around a stretch of unpatrolled road. It works for some folk, but this boy doesn't get off on it. If you like this sort of thing, why not try MicroStyle's "Stunt Car Racer" - which, incidentally, I like more than most racing games. Please feel free to give it a spin.



MegaZone Scoreboard

POWER DRIFT

GRAPHICS:	5
COLOUR:	5
ACTION:	6
SOUND:	4
DOCUMENTATION:	7
MENTAL ANGUISH:	2
LASTING INTEREST:	3
VALUE FOR MONEY:	3
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	45

Reviewed on:	Amiga
Also for:	Atari ST, C64
Software by:	Sega
Distributor:	Ozisoft
R.R.P.:	**$69.95**

CHASE H.Q.

VALENTINO ROSSI: IF THIS IS THE WAY YOU USE A PORSCHE, YOU MAY NOT BORROW THE CONTACH! DAD.

Chase H.Q. is an arcade-style car race/chase/ram'em-off-the-road game where you play the part of an undercover cop whose job it is to catch up with criminals who are escaping at top speed through the streets and freeways of the US.

Somehow they always seem to have one of the best sports cars around, but this doesn't bother you in your turbo-charged Porsche 928 as you and your partner (who doesn't do much except "yee-ha" when you hit the turbo boost!) tear through the streets at 300km/h plus, trying to avoid the cretinous drivers on the roads as you race against the clock to catch up with the crooks.

You have 60 seconds to catch them, and a further 60 seconds to ram them enough times to force them to stop at the side of the road. With each hit on their car, more and more smoke and finally flames erupt from the back of their loverly Lamborghini or De Lorien! After you catch one car, you receive a call from H.Q. telling you the details of another escaping baddy, and it's back to the streets again. You also have a few credits at the start of the game, so that you can choose to continue a game even after your car has been totalled, at least a few times.

The graphics are fairly standard, similar to games like Crazy Cars II where the road and surrounding countryside is drawn as alternating dark and light strips, which gives the impression of speed (though not all that well in this case). The road does have hills and crests, so that you can go literally flying over a sudden rise at nearly 400km/h with the boost on, after which you'll come back to earth with a sickening crunch! Buildings, telephone poles and other obstacles also tend to make life hard, especially when you've gone into a corner too fast and are in an uncontrollable slide and heading for the gutter.

Sound effects throughout are excellent. When you get your calls from H.Q. it not only shows a full-screen view of your car's computerised police radio tuning itself in and then display the message, but you actually hear a digitised female voice saying the words. At other times in the game your partner will come up with such immortal lines as "Let's go Mr Driver" or "Let's get 'em", which adds to the atmosphere of the game. Other sound effects such as screeching tyres and the turbo boost whine are also well done.

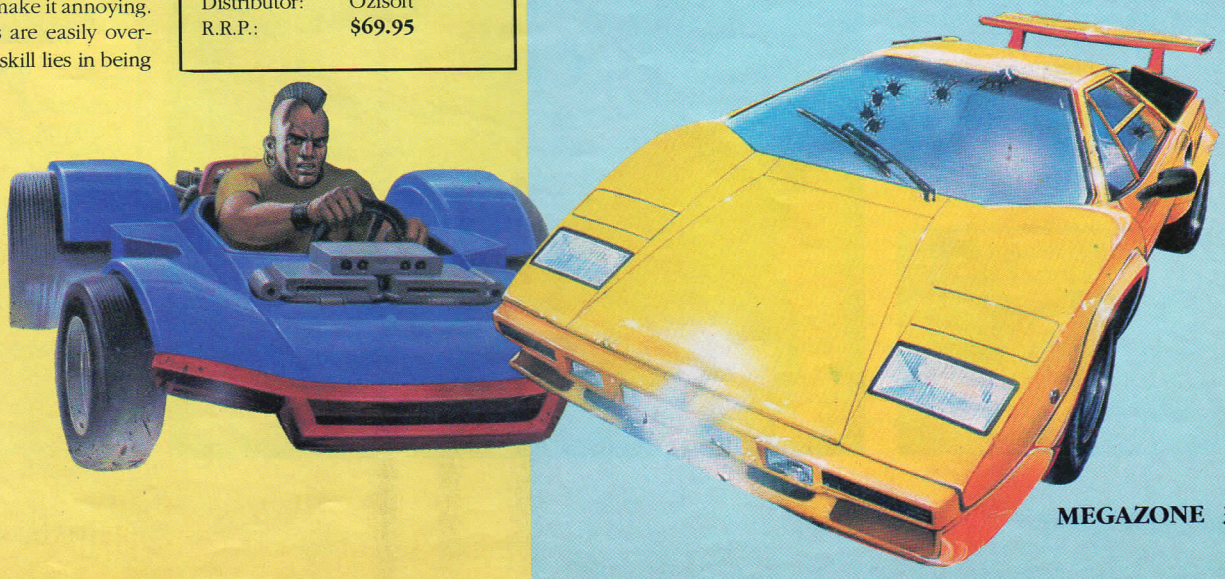
Overall, Chase H.Q. is a playable enough game, with enough addictive qualities to keep you going for quite a while. Unless the later levels (which I haven't managed to get to yet) are very different frm the first ones, the sameness of it all may tend to get to you a little. Worth looking at.

MegaZone Scoreboard

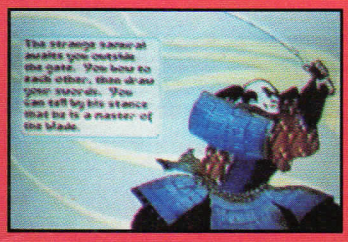
Chase H.Q.

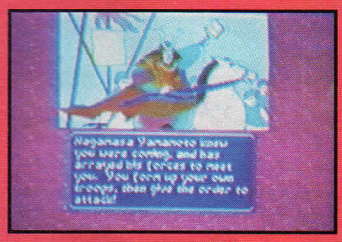
GRAPHICS:	7
COLOUR:	6
ACTION:	7
SOUND:	8
DOCUMENTATION:	6
MENTAL ANGUISH:	6
LASTING INTEREST:	7
VALUE FOR MONEY:	6
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	62.5

Reviewed on:	Amiga
Also for:	Atari ST
Software by:	Ocean
Distributor:	Questor
R.R.P.:	**$49.95**



侍 SWORD OF THE SAMURAI

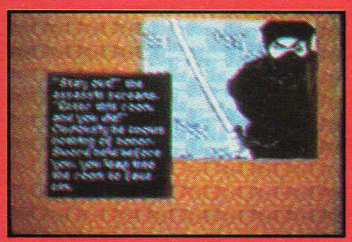




ADAM SVENSON DOES WHAT BUSHIDO DOES BEST.

Ohayo Gozaimasu; Ogenki des'ka? or for those who haven't eaten sushi lately; G'day; how are you? Here we have a game that throws you back to feudal Japan or Nikon as it was known then in the "Senoku Jidai" period between 1490 to 1600 AD.

You are a lowly young Samurai equipped only with a cheap "Karuta gane" breast plate and "Kabuto" helmet for protection. Your pride and joy however is the sword handed down to you from your father and his father before. In your skilled hands it becomes a lethal "haiku" in steel (short poem of high a esthetic value). The task ahead of you is immense. In this game of strategy and skill you must develop your level of honour to the utmost, increase the amount of land under your control of your leadership qualities to the point where you can lead armies into battle to crush your rivals and become the Shogun. Venturing away from your territory you may encounter bandits, other Samurai and so on who attack you for your honour or your life. Should you not choose to run you fight in one of three ways depending on whether you are accompanied by your troops, attacked en masse or challenged to a duel. When leading your troops you must manoeuvre them to best effect. Should you have been travelling alone and find yourself ambushed in a paddy field, within an inn or castle you must fight your opponents with bow or blade until they are dispatched or an escape route is found. The duel is perhaps the dealiest encounter requiring skilled use of the blade. The scope for the game is very large indeed, encompassing among other things travel, campaigns, marriage and children, intimidating and coercing rivals or dealing with and being involved in treachery. Attention must be paid by the player to the Samurai way of life, Bushido. The game runs well with good graphics and sound. The literature accompanying the software is of exceptional quality with detailed and in-depth discussion of period history, the code of the samurai, the art of sword making and Japanese armour. All in all this is one of the most impressive software packages of its type I have seen.

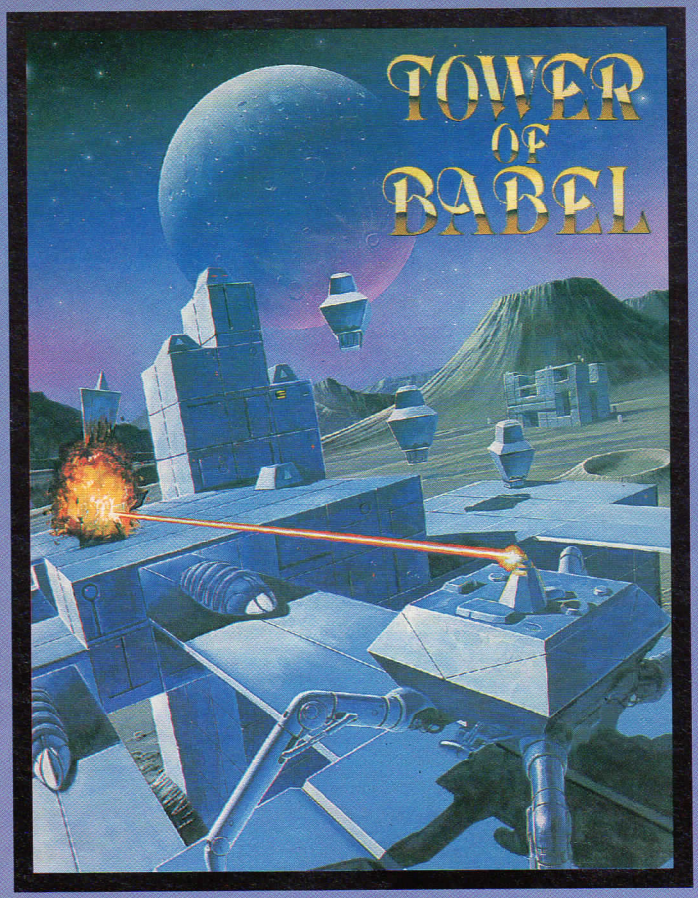


MegaZone Scoreboard

SWORD OF THE SAMURAI

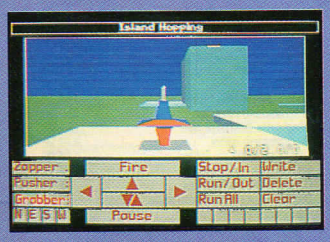
GRAPHICS:	8
COLOUR:	7
ACTION:	7
SOUND:	7
DOCUMENTATION:	9
MENTAL ANGUISH:	8
LASTING INTEREST:	8
VALUE FOR MONEY:	8
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	77.5

Reviewed on: IBM
Software by: Microprose
Distributor: Questor
R.R.P.: **$89.95**



ADAM SEVENSON HATES SPIDERS... LOVES THE GAME, THOUGH.

Adam Svenson hates spiders... loves the game, though. Tower of Babel is one of the latest games from the Rainbird label and it's a stunner. I have to say that this game has very impressive 3D Graphics, interesting gameplay and it's based on a premise that is highly original. Well, Tower of Babel puts you in a world of towers, spiders and Shinarians who create traps to destroy the spiders. Your mission is to guide the spiders to their home and to overcome the traps which await you. The action takes place in a tower or towers if you play the game long enough. It is in these towers where all sorts of nasty creatures and traps try to hinder your progress. You can view the game either through the eyes of the spiders or by using one of four cameras in each tower. It helps to use all these view points when working out a puzzle. Solving the puzzles becomes more challenging as you go through each stage. This is due not only to the complexity of the puzzle but also to a time limit in which you have to complete each puzzle. There are also different types of spiders which are involved, each with its own special ability such as the Pusher, which moves objects; the Zapper which is a spider who fires lazer beams; the Grabber who collects objects, and so on. Tower of Babel is fairly easy to control through the use of an icon system. There are also macro facilities available to help you control more than one spider at a time, something which is very useful when you get into the more difficult towers. Tower of Babel is a stylish and original game. It's not full of arcade action but this game puts your brain to work. The graphics, sound and gameplay are all first class for this type of game and it's addictive.

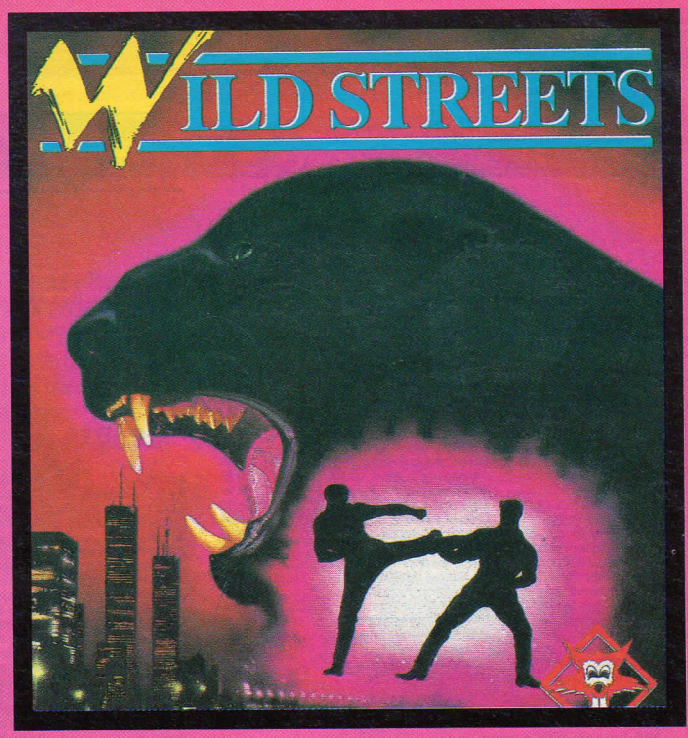


MegaZone Scoreboard

TOWER OF BABEL

GRAPHICS	8
COLOUR:	8
ACTION:	7
SOUND:	7
DOCUMENTATION:	8
MENTAL ANGUISH:	9
LASTING INTEREST:	8
VALUE FOR MONEY:	8
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	79

Reviewed on:	Atari ST
Also For:	Amiga
Software by:	Rainbird
Distributor:	Questor
R.R.P.	**$59.95**



OUT IN THE CONCRETE JUNGLE WITH A BLACK VIRGIN, TERRY KIRKWOOD SAYS GOODBYE TO CLEOPATRA JONES.

Titus have given us such titles as FIre and Forget and Crazy Cars II (both previously revived in Megacomp) and though they usually come up with a nice-looking game with reasonable gameplay, they always seem to miss the mark ever so slightly.

Wild Streets, a new release from Titus, seems to follow in this tradition. The startup intro is excellent (that's one thing that they can do very well) showing a city skyline at night, with sounds of police cars, gunshots, screams and the growling of an animal in the background along with some fitting background music.

This is basically a street-fighting game, something along the lines of Double Dragon, although you can't climb all over the interact with the background graphics. While I'm on the subject, Wild Streets has some very realistic and colourful backgrounds, which are out of the league of games such as Double Dragon, but scenery is scenery and in this case it has little to do with the gameplay.

In this game you must roam the streets, searching for a captured V.I.P., then take him to safety. There are many street gangs who will get in your way, some tougher than others, but as you are an expert street-fighter this should pose no problem. Not to mention that you have a .44 Magnum. If this isn't enough, you have the aid of a sleek panther called Black Virgin which acts on its own whim, attacking your enemies as it pleases. Both you and the panther have energy levels which you must take care to preserve, as well as a limited amount of ammo for your gun.

Wild Streets relies heavily on graphics, and while the backgrounds are nice, the sprites and animation are not particularly impressive although the characters are nice and large for a change. The sound, also, is reasonable, but there could be a lot more of it. The control you have over your character is ok, with the usual high/low punches and kicks, and is quite easy to get used to.

I always look forward to a new game from Titus, because I can't help thinking that one day they will come up with a game that not only looks impressive, but plays well too. Wild Streets is unfortunately not the one I'm waiting for, though I'm sure it will appeal to quite a few people. In all fairness, my review copy mysteriously crashed after just a few plays (another argument against copy protection?) so perhaps there was something there which I did not get to, but I doubt it. Take a look at it if you can, but don't rush straight out and buy it without a thought.

MegaZone Scoreboard

WILD STREETS

GRAPHICS:	6
COLOUR:	8
ACTION:	7
SOUND:	6
DOCUMENTATION:	6
MENTAL ANGUISH:	4
LASTING INTEREST:	6
VALUE FOR MONEY:	6
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	61

Reviewed on:	Amiga
Also for:	IBM
Software by:	Titus
Distributor:	Questor
R.R.P.:	**$69.95** (Amiga)

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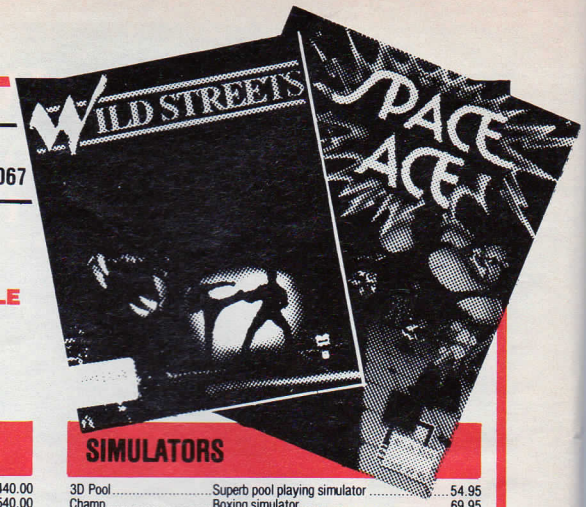

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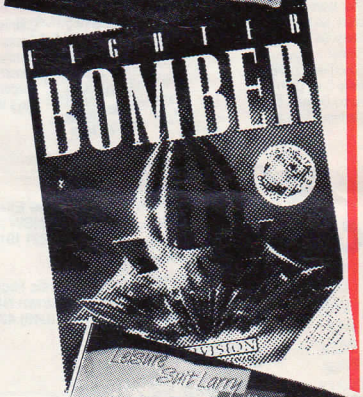

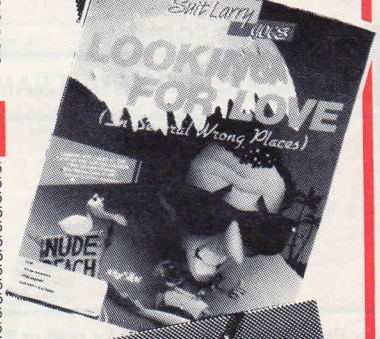

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CREATURE™

JENNIFER GOULD SEZ: "MOVE OVER RIPLEY!"

Following on from P.O.W. and Capone, Actionware now has a scientific fiction title to add to the series, called Creature. Creature seems to me to be more than loosely based on the 'Alien' movies, involving a search through space ships, space stations and even the interior of a planet while being pestered from all sides by a large assortment of alien creatures. This is a preview of the Amiga version.

While P.O.W. and Capone were not much more than shoot-everything-that- moves games, Creature at least has some sort of plot to it. The idea is to first explore a space ship and retrieve some important item from it, go to a space station and get more supplies to keep you going as well as disarm a nuclear reactor which is set to explode, then make your way to a lunar base and go underground in the hope(?) of finding Mother, the biggest and deadliest alien of them all. Mother can't be killed, your shots will only stun it for a short time.

Graphics in the game are well up to par for Actionware, with very nicely drawn backgrounds and well-drawn and animated characters. Sound is also quite good, but they are just the usual beeps and buzzes, except for a couple of special sequences at the start of the game. One point to note here is that with 1 Mb of RAM or more you will get enhanced graphics and sound in the game.

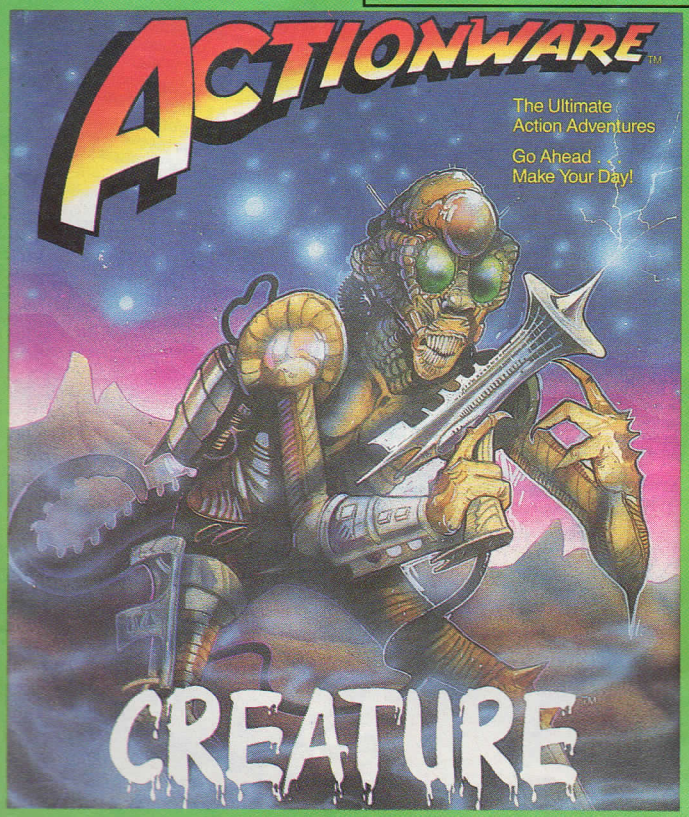
Perhaps the biggest feature of all is that you can use a specially made 'phaser gun' which you actually point at the screen to shoot the baddies. Unfortunately these were not provided for review, but provide an altogether different feel to the game which is quite unique to this series of games. If you have an Amiga 500 or 2000 you can even have two of these guns connected and play the game with two players simultaneously.

Creature will be well worth looking out for, especially if you enjoyed the other Actionware games mentioned and even more so if you have the phaser guns.

MegaZone Scoreboard

CREATURE

GRAPHICS:	8
COLOUR	8
ACTION:	7
SOUND:	6
DOCUMENTATION:	7
MENTAL ANGUISH:	6
LASTING INTEREST:	8
VALUE FOR MONEY:	8
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	72.5
Reviewed on:	Amiga Software
by:	Actionware
Distributor	Questor
R.R.P.	**$49.95**



THIS ONE MADE CHIMERA CHUNDER: A YOBBO'S DELIGHT.

Once in a while, I find a pleasant offering waiting at the entrance to my lair. These superstitious natives are quite keen to please a mythical beast, especially one with a vile disposition such as the one possessed by Yours Truly. Occasionally, they goof. Okay, so it give me a chance to "step out" a little, incinerate a few huts, etc. etc. All done in the best possible taste, of course...

Not so with this bow-wow!!.

"Aussie Games" is a sports-sim for those who know nothing about sports, and even less about Oz. Six events on four disk sides. All are ridiculous rehashes of other videosports, diddled with to give the impression of being true Australian past-times. Only two have any claim to being such: Boomerang Throwing, and the Boat Race, Todd River style. The rest are crap.

Now: before anyone asks, No. I did NOT get out on the wrong side this morning. As a matter of fact, I am unusually chirpy: more so for seeing how I fared in The Survey. Many thanx to my fans out there...Chimera especially thanks for the score 23.5, and the little chap who called me "Yo-Yo".

Each will be rewarded accordingly, in the Fullness of Time. (heh heh heh...)

Where was I? Oh. The "games" are: Belly Whack, Beach Footy, Boomerang Throw, Boat Race, Beer Shoot and Marlin Fishing. Each has its own "unique" charm. (ack, bleck, thhpt!)

Belly Whacking is practised by folk knows as "Whackers". Anyone who enjoys a 10m/sec/sec fall ONTO something only slightly less forgiving than concrete, needs urgent medication! Apparently, the Yanks think that the Spirit of Dundee lives on in Oz. The game involves pressing the "fire" button after a bit of joystick-waggling to launch some hyperventilated Yobbo into Sydney Harbour.

I'm told it's an almost spiritual thing...

Gameplay is limited to the waggling of joysticks and slo-mo button pushing in almost all of the scenarios, and proves if not tedious, somewhat embarrassing if caught doing it from behind!

The graphics are indifferent, and offer a bare-bones view of landmarks. (sort of...)

My copy had fairly serious glitches in the sprites, what with a boat being resolved into a red smear, boomerangs thrown from the truncated (i.e. "topless") Aborigine, and phantom footballers. I promise to try

it again, after cleaning the drive heads. (honest!)

The very worst event would have to be the Beer Shoot. With an astonishing "Yob Factor" of 99.9, it would have to be the most stupid simulation ever executed. Imagine a bush "highway" (an upholstered goat track), a Minimoke full of lager-crazed loons armed with shotguns, playing skeet-shoot with empty Stubbies. Real Clever, eh?

As a sop to Cerberus (an old chum of mine), the authors point out that drink and driving do NOT mix.

....Which explains why American "sporting shooters" wear red vests ("I didn't know the driver wash loaded ossifer *hic*)

Marlin Fishing is reserved for rich American boneheads who can afford that sort of thing. As the fish usually end up in some Septic Xanadu, this event is of zip consequence.

Oh, something else. They have included a "glossary" of Strine (Australian Slang) for all of us to learn before Tourist Season starts. Try to make an effort this time, willya?

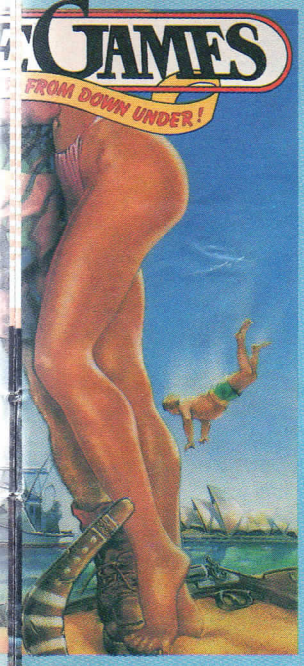
As usual, they forgot to include Tasmania. (Tip o' the hat to Vian for that!)

Maybe I've been a little harsh. It's part of my job.

With software prices going ballistic, we reviewers have a duty to the Public. We stand alone, stern and unafraid...Speaking out against all that is wrong in the Markeplace, and righting those wrongs. We are not Gods, nor are we human. On the fringes of your perception we dwell, tapped into the collective psyche, playing it like a Celtic Harp. The Music Gone On...

...Damn! What the Hell was that?!!!

Oh. I see. The basic thrust of that waxing o' lyricals was supposed to go something like this: The software



package is a dud, as far as I am concerned. No amount of bribery, coercion, pandering, or basic heavy duty grovelling will change my mind. Save your money. Buy another copy of "Galactic Games" and spare joystick. You'll feel soooo much better.

You'll also need that spare joystick...

Postscript: I say boycott the American "franchised outlet" nearest to you, in retaliation to this tacky affront to this (sometimes) Great Land of OURS!

Do not let Australia become another U.S. satellite with a decaying orbit, periodically overrun by unbalanced cowboys, Klansmen and Drug-runners!

BE PURE, BE VIGILANT, BEHAVE! (rant, seethe, gnash, harangue, harangue...)

(Apologies to Torquemada, Tharg and 2000AD)

MegaZone Scoreboard

AUSSIE GAMES

GRAPHICS	5.5
COLOUR	6
ACTION	3
SOUND:	6
(Ack, Bleck, Thhpt! Ugh!)	
DOCUMENTATION:	5
(Adequate to play, but a tacky read!)	
MENTAL ANGUISH:	0
(Rednecks only)	
LASTING INTEREST:	3
(Only because I'm checking the sprite glitch)	
VALUE FOR MONEY:	5
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	42
Reviewed on	C64
Software by	Mindscape
Distributor:	Mindscape
R.R.P.:	**$39.95**

The JETSONS©

George Jetson and the Legend of Robotopia

VALENTINO ROSSI MEETS GEORGE JETSON, AND WINDS UP WITH A CASE OF FUTURE SHOCK.

The Jetsons is a new release from MicroIllusions, the people who brought us the epic Faery Tale Adventure, and who are enjoying a growing reputation for high quality games. The Jetsons is part of a coming series of Hanna Barbera Games (Hanna-Barbera are the creators of the original Jetsons cartoon series from T.V., not to mention the Flintstones, Scooby Doo and countless others!).

If you haven't heard of the Jetsons, they are a family of the future, consisting of George and Jane (father and mother) son Elroy, daughter Judy and sort-of-talking-dog Astro (if you've heard Scooby Doo talk, then you know what I mean. They first appeared as a cartoon series some years ago and were very successful at the time, though I haven't seen them myself in years.

The Jetsons game (subtitled George Jetson and the Legend of Robotopia) is a text and graphics adventure aimed at a younger audience, with a few differences.

The screen consists of seven areas or windows, each with a specific purpose. The three main ones are for the graphic display of what you can see (which is animated), the narration area where the text such as descriptions and dialogue is displayed and the actions area, where special options are displayed for you to choose. This is where the Jetsons differs slightly from most other adventures. At various times throughout the game, several options appear in the actions area which may be a list of special things you can do at the moment, or selection of things which you can say to the character or characters with which you are currently interacting.

For instance, you may have the choice of telling your boss: you want to quit, you want to beg to have your job back or you want to ask if there is anything you can do to save your job. Of course, your boss will respond according to which one you choose. This may seem a bit limiting, but in actual fact, when you're playing the game, it is not.

The other four areas, or windows, on the screen are for displaying what you're carrying, for showing which other characters you can interact with at the moment, for displaying a plan

including obvious exits) and for six icons of often-used commands such icons of often-used commands such as Look, Go, etc. There is no typing needed at all throughout the game.

In the game you play the part of George Jetson, the long-suffering employee of a certain Mr Spacely. At the start of the game, you've just woken up to find that your alarm clock didn't go off when it should have, and that you're two hours late for work. You have to get up and dress, find your car keys, risk grabbing a quick breakfast and somehow find your way to work. Once you get there, you find that Mr Spacely is going to fire you, unless you perform a special mission for him to Robotopia, and so the main game begins.

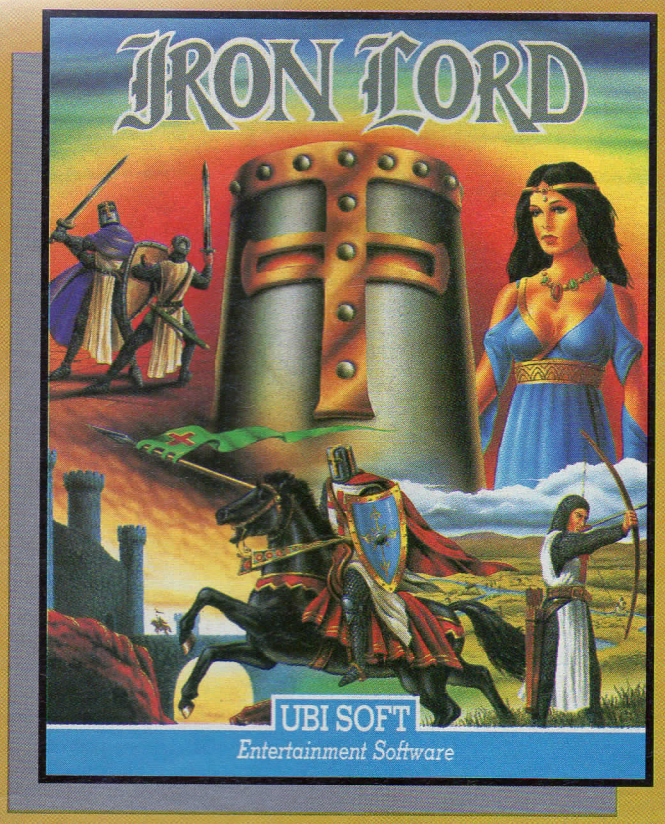
Entering commands is extremely simple, either by clicking directly on the screen or by using the command icons provided. The graphics are very good, with cartoon-like animation here and there to spruce things up a bit. There is a reasonable amount of sound which appears to have been digitised from those used in the actual cartoon.

Although apparently aimed at the younger market, The Jetsons is actually a very large game with many locations, items, characters and puzzles to keep most adventurers occupied for some time (it occupies two discs). Gameplay is excellent and documentation is hardly needed so that you can get into it very quickly. This is a game to look out for, and if it's anything to go by, the next titles in the series should be excellent.

MegaZone Scoreboard

THE JETSONS

GRAPHICS:	8
COLOUR:	8
ACTION:	6
SOUND:	7
DOCUMENTATION:	8
MENTAL ANGUISH:	7
LASTING INTEREST:	8
VALUE FOR MONEY:	8
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	75
Reviewed on:	Amiga
Also for:	Macintosh II
Software by:	Microillusions
Distributor:	Questor
R.R.P.:	**$49.95**



SERF'S UP! THINGS ARE TOUGH ENOUGH, BUT THIS SQUIRE'S GOT REAL TROUBLE. VALENTINO ROSSI TELLS ALL.

Iron Lord is a new title from UBISoft, set in medieval times, where you play the part of a young knight who is trying to gain prowess and a reputation for strength, courage and intelligence in order to obtain followers in his quest to overcome an evil empire threatening to overtake the land in which he lives. This review is based on the Amiga version of the game.

At the start of the game you are presented with a birds-eye view of the entire countryside where you live, including your castle, neighbouring towns and other places of interest. A single road connects them all, and travel between these locations can usually only be made via this road. Clicking on a location on this screen will send you on horseback to that location, if it is possible to get there in one move.

You have simply a weapon, some armour and a small amount of gold to begin with, and it is from these humble beginnings that you are expected to rise to fame and muster up an army capable of taking on the might of the enemy. Items can be bought from various shops throughout the land, where you can find the usual assortments of Inns, shops, etc.

Once you have travelled to a location the view changes to a picture of that location, be it a town, castle, hut, etc, as well as an above-ground view of your immediate surroundings, showing your character in the centre. It is this small character that you move around the area by using the mouse or joystick, and pressing the fire/mouse button when you want to 'do' something, such as enter a building or get back onto your house (leave the town).

Once inside an actual building, a different view appears, this time of the proprietor of the establishment (slightly animated) on the left of screen, and a list of options on the right of screen. The options include Inventory, Examine, Discuss, Buy, Give and Money. Most of these are self-explanatory, except for discuss. Using this option you can have a conversation with someone by choosing from a list of optional comments. Depending on the replies you get, you will then get more specific things to say, hopefully leading up to the exact information you are looking for (usually, "is there anyone around here who can help me build an army"!)

Some buildings have special attributes. For instance there is one pub where you can play a game of dice (for money) or arm-wrestle with someone (for fame!). Succeeding in these seemingly unimportant activities is actually how you increase your reputation and notoriety in the game, which is what you really need to do at the start, in order to gain those followers you are after.

Other people will ask you (but never straight out) to help them in various ways which will also increase your status in the land. You have to be careful though, because there are many crooks about.

Once you think you have amassed a large enough army, you then go back to your castle where you have the option of declaring war. Once you have done this, your army will be placed in the battlefield with the enemy's, and from where you have a new series of commands and actions. You can actually 'program' your forces by choosing up to 7 moves for them, in advance, and then watch as your commands are executed.

Defeating the enemy's army is not the last thing you must do, however. The Labyrinth awaits you to explore and fathom out its secrets. There are 6 levels here, and you must work your way through all of them, finding the exit from each one in turn. In addition, between each level you must prove your skill in an arcade sequence.

The graphics throughout the entire game are excellent, on a par with such classics as Defender of the Crown (Cinemaware) and will undoubtedly draw comparisons with this game. Gameplay is very much different however, and they cannot really be compared. I have not even mentioned all the features in this game, and the archery contest and sword-fighting with deadly assassins are not the least interesting parts of the game either. All of these sub-games are very well done, and blend in with the main game perfectly.

Iron Lord has quite good sound effects: trotting and galloping of horses' hooves, twanging of bowstrings, clashing of swords and screams of pain are just a few. One thing which really annoyed me with the game is the background music. While there is nothing particularly bad about it, it is very loud even on low volume so that when you get to sequences with sound effects you need to turn the volume way up again, or leave it off altogether, as there is no function for turning the music off. Well, I had to complain about something.

There is not much else to complain about though. As you can see, Iron Lord is quite an epic, and won't be completed overnight; I think that UBIsoft have come up with a winner. Great graphics and a very playable game are what it's all about these days, and Iron Lord has them. It may not become a classic, but it is a great game which you can play time and again.

MegaZone Scoreboard

IRON LORD

GRAPHICS	8
COLOUR:	8
ACTION:	7
SOUND:	7
DOCUMENTATION:	8
MENTAL ANGUISH:	8
LASTING INTEREST:	8
VALUE FOR MONEY:	8
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	77.5

Reviewed on:	Amiga
Also for:	Atari ST, C64 Cass & Disc, Amstrad, IBM
Software by:	UBIsoft
Distributor:	Questor
R.R.P.:	**$59.95**

ELLEN MAY FOUND THIS SWORD, Y'SEE, AND THE REST IS LEFT TO HISTORY!

Avatar walked into the room. "I've got some work for you, Ellen", he said. "Review this, will you? I've already got too many articles to do". Well, I only just discovered bulletin boards last week; why not adventure games this week?

Avatar showed me how to install the disks, and the process seemed to tally quite well with that described in the instructions. I'm sure that anyone who actually knows what the terms mean and how computers work will have had no particular problems there. Then the game started!

The player gets to be young Arthur accidentally wandering through a churchyard in post-Roman Britain containing...surprise, surprise, a sword in a stone. But it's not quite as easy as in the books - Merlin turns up and spoils everything by announcing that you, as Arthur, have to prove yourself by earning Chivalry, Wisdom, Experience and Quest points before you can draw the sword and get to be king of all Britain.

So off you troop, getting killed in the first minute or so if you're anything like me. Once past that first obstacle though, the game is a lot of fun in a fairly mindless sort of way, as you wander around and attempt to earn your full complement of points by doing the right things in the right order. Merlin does have his uses; he gives you a crystal-tipped torque and a rather useful spell allowing you to change into various animals, the idea of which seems to be inspired by the Arthurian novels of T.H. White.

Looking into Merlin's crystal ball or the crystal on your torque allows you to read various hints on the game, which are progressively graduated from the subtle to the blatantly obvious. Hints are only provided for situations you've already come across in the game, so you can't get hints for problems you haven't encountered yet and there's even a facility to prevent yourself from being tempted to use the hints too much. Losing the torque like I did is another solution to that!

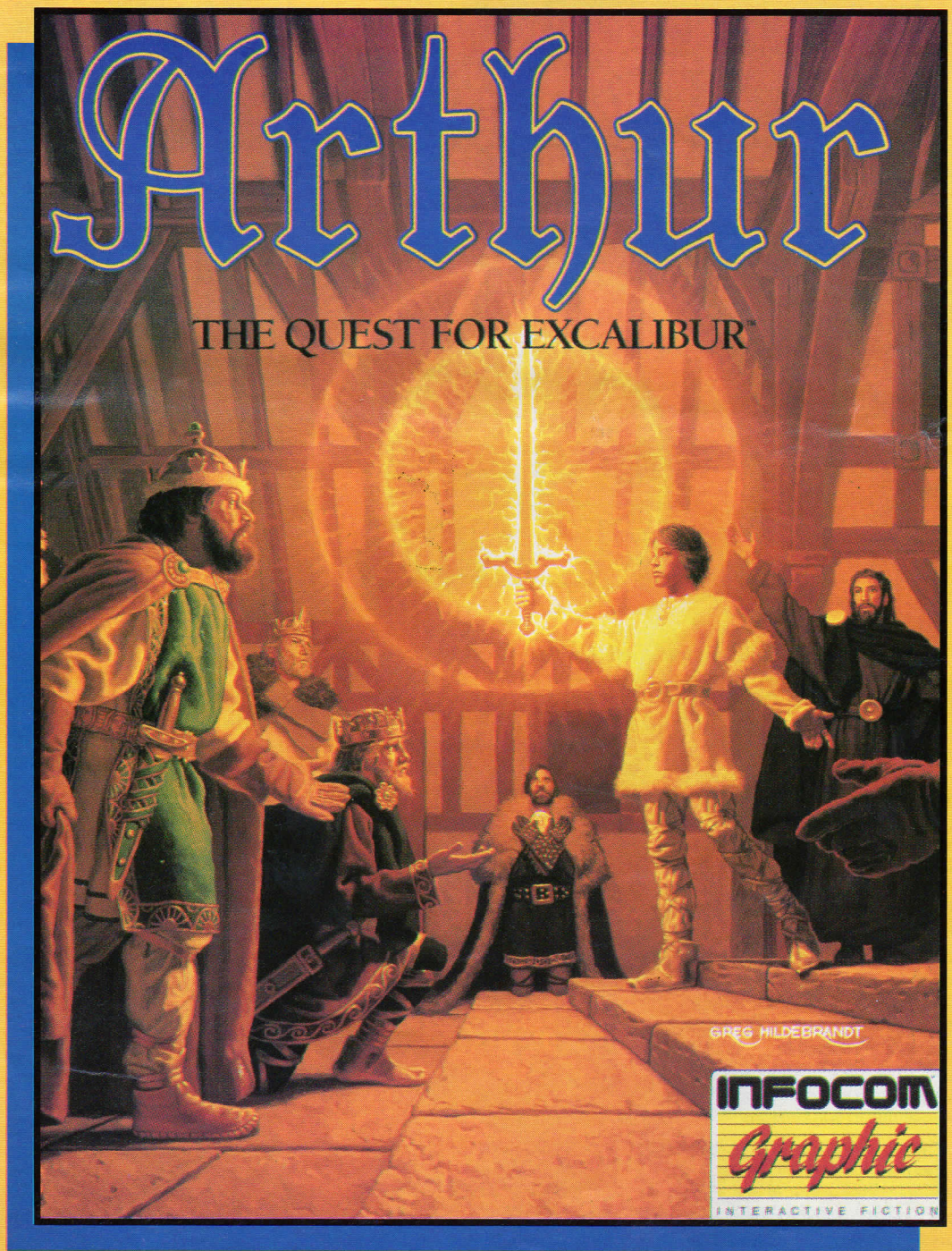
I should stress that detailed knowledge of the Arthurian myths is not necessary; the game actually mangles some of the better known facts for the sake of convenience anyway. And don't believe everything the historical notes in the hints tell you; the alternative poem "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" was written in the 14 century - NOT before 1066 as claimed.

The game itself is very easy to play, assisted by the very clear instructions in the accompanying booklet. A beautifully illustrated medieval-style "Book of Hours" also comes with the game, and presumably contains some clues you'll need to solve it. The pictures in the game were very pretty in 256 colour VGA mode and apparently don't look too bad in EGA mode either; for those of you with a CGA the pictures are displayed in black and white, which surprisingly enough actually makes them look better than you'd expect!

Most of the more frequently used commands such as compass directions, "again", "wait" and "examine" have single letter abbreviations, which speeds things up considerably. I found the "Undo" command (which retracts your last command) particularly useful for avoiding death,

and thus the end of the game! By pressing various function keys, you can summon up a picture of your current location, a map of your movements so far, a list of your belongings and clothing, or even (for diehards who don't like pretty pictures) a plain full-screen text mode.

All in all, if you want to play with interactive fiction games, ARTHUR is probably quite a good one to choose. It's not frantically hard, but is not mindnumbingly easy, either (though people who have played this sort of thing before will probably find it easier than I did). Not too bad a way of spending a few hours.

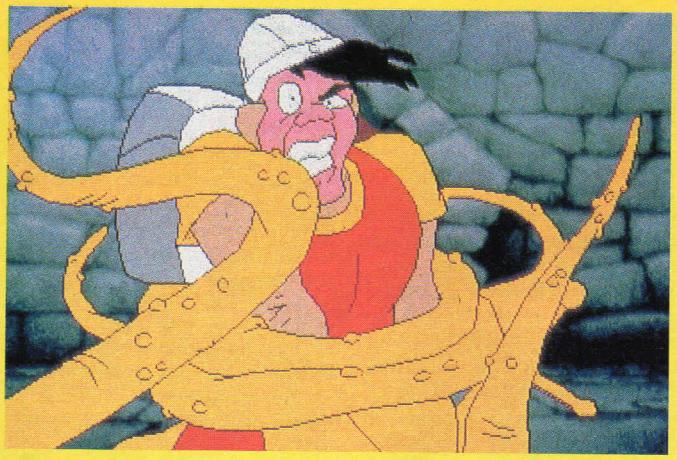


MegaZone Scoreboard

ARTHUR

GRAPHICS	9.5
COLOUR:	9
ACTION:	2
SOUND:	0
DOCUMENTATION:	9
MENTAL ANGUISH:	10
LASTING INTEREST:	9.5
VALUE FOR MONEY:	8
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	71.2

Reviewed on:	IBM clone
Also for:	Amiga Software
by:	Infocom
Distributor:	Ozisoft
R.R.P.:	**$59.95**



VALENTINO ROSSI DALLIES WITH DIRK THE DARING DUELLING WITH DASTARD DRACONIDS (AGAIN!)

Continuing in the series of laser-disk games adapted for the personal computer comes the sequel to Dragon's Lair called Escape From Singe's Castle. Its full title (wait for it) is "Sullivan Bluth's Dragon's Lair; Escape from Singe's Castle," though, somehow I think it will come to be known as Dragon's Lair 2. At this time Escape is only available for the Amiga (all models, minimum 512k RAM as opposed to Dragon's Lair's 1MB), and is produced by Visionary Ltd., a different mob from the ones who did the first Dragon's Lair and Space Ace (previewed last issue).

Escape's gameplay is basically the same as the original - that is, you play the role of the main character, Dirk the Daring, by controlling (to a limited extent) his actions and reactions to whatever is thrown at him. There are just five different actions you can use – moving forward, backward, left or right, and pressing the fire button, which has different uses in different situations. This is a joystick-only game, with no keyboard option as there was in Dragon's Lair and Space Ace.

There are a number of differences and features in Escape worth mentioning which are non-existent in the first Dragon's Lair. Escape will run in several different modes, depending upon the amount of memory your Amiga has, and will automatically configure itself to work as efficiently as possible. You can play with only 512k, but you will have no sound, and a couple of sequences (when Dirk is killed and when he is reborn) will be omitted. If you have other programs running in the background, Escape will (memory permitting) run alongside them without a worry.

If there is a lack of memory, you will be asked if you wish to close down these other programs to free up more memory, and if there is still not enough, the ganme will ask you if you wish to close down the entire operating system, disable sound within the game, and so on until it can run. So, even though you can play it with 512k, 1Mb is recommended. It is not clear from the documentation whether or not RAM in excess of 1Mb would be used by the game.

Escape can also be installed on a hard disk drive, which would obviously be vastly superior to playing it from floppies with all the disk swapping involved. Not only that but, if you own the original Dragon's Lair game you can optionally 'link' it to Escape, creating a fully blown game which consists of the original and the sequel together, and you can even install the entire thing on hard disk (eleven 880Kb floppies worth! – Dragon's Lair came on six floppies, Escape comes on five). Equipped with a few meg of RAM and a hard drive, you could really thumb your nose at the arcade version...

There is more, however. A 'helper' option will display an arrow at the bottom of the screen which actually tells you the direction you should move at any given moment. Depending upon the level of difficulty you have chosen (there are three), the arrow will appear with a varying amount of time for you to react to the situation. If you have Dragon's Lair 1 'linked', this option will work in it also. But the helper option will disappear as you get further into the game, and is really intended to get you started and to give you a feel for the game.

Another option is 'room flipping' which, if chosen, will make you play every room twice, the second time being a complete mirror image of its original version (the mirrored room will not necessarily appear immediately after the normal room). Not only that, but Escape "intelligently randomises individual segments of any room" which effectively means that you will never get exactly the same game more than once. The "once you've finished it , forget it" syndrome has always been a major criticism of this type of game , so we'll have to wait and see if this feature can amend that problem. Escape also supports saved games, so that you can store your position (or several positions) in the game on disk to avoid having to start over from scratch all the time. Any options you selected will also be saved.

Provided in the package are the five game disks, good instructions which clearly explain all the game's options as well as hard-disk installation instructions, and a map of the countryside where the game takes place which doesn't serve much of a purpose except, I guess, to add some flavour to the game. Piracy deterrent measures for Escape consist of a small four-page leaflet with several dozen shield emblems, one of which must be identified near the start of the game before you can continue playing.

The final picture is this: Escape from Singe's Castle has excellent animated graphics and sound which live up to the standards set by the original. Installed on a hard-disk and/or with at least 1Mb of RAM at your disposal, Escape would be an extremely enjoyable and very playable game. For the average floppy-based system, however, this one seems somehow even more disk-happy than the original, despite the maker's claims of "Burstloader" technology which is claimed to load rooms ten times faster, with the between-room pause seemingly interminable...

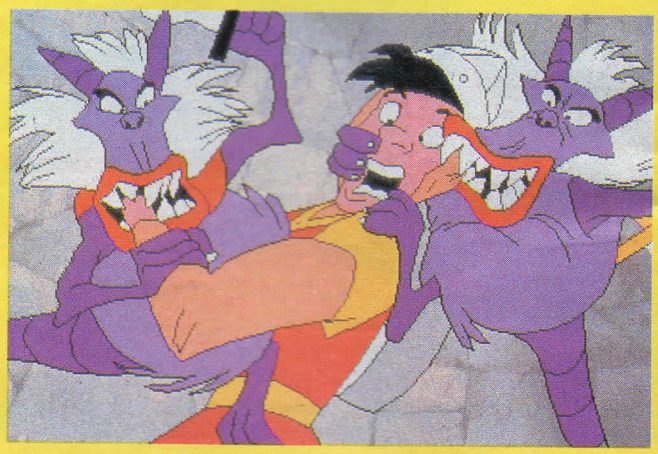
Tino Rossi

MegaZone Scoreboard

DRAGON'S LAIR: ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE

GRAPHICS:	8
COLOUR:	9
ACTION:	8
SOUND:	9
DOCUMENTATION:	8
MENTAL ANGUISH:	2
LASTING INTEREST:	8
VALUE FOR MONEY:	8
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	72

Reviewed on:	Amiga
Also for :	Atari ST (soon)
Software by:	Visionary Design
Distributor:	Questor
R.R.P. :	**$89.95** (Amiga)



BIG ARNIE SPEAKS

Hi dere, it's BIG ARNIE at yer service! Dose of yas out dere will probably notice dat de mega guys have finally represented me in me true form. If dey show dat wimpy sceck from a few years ago agin I'll rip deir arms off and make dem eat rocks! Yeah! Well one o' me fave games at de moment (I'm sure ya wouldn't expect it) is PRO TENNIS Pat Cash style. Heh Heh! A real blast. Smash balls, smash heads, smash refs, smash every ding. Only prob' is when dem jerks show de French open in Paris. dey shows a pic' o' Paris. Wimbledon shows a pic' o' London, the U.S. open shows New York and de Oz open in Melbourne shows a pic' o' de opera house and de harbour bridge! Is Sydney a northern suburb o' Melbourne or is Melbourne in Sydney or somethin' ??

When I haven't bin head buttin' brick walls, I've bin playing LEISURE SUIT LARRY. Dis game is about dis guy who's going to de gym and builds lots o' muscle. Den he sleezes onto de women .... My type o' guy! Good one Larry!

I've heard a few o' you don't like de way I talk; tough!

Okay, I better gives ya some hints before me services is required to straighten a few noses Arnie style.

IT CAME FROM THE DESERT.

If youse is havin' troubles finding dem pesky ants, Gee I keeps finding dem in me pants. If youse wanna find dem go to dat volcano in de south east. Youse might also find dem near de mine 1 or near de north east volcano. However de best tip here is ta aks lots o' guys where dey's seen 'em. Dats in de game, okay. Don't talk to da neighbours about dem or dey thinks yas a looney!

DEJA VU 2

Well, when I was a kid me mummy always told me ta take long walks off short piers or ta play on da railway tracks. Well, in dis game don't cross dem tracks or yas gets splattered like a moth on da wind-shield of ya car or ya goggles when yas on ya motor bike.

BATTLETECH THE CRESCENT HAWK INTERCEPTION

Da star chart room in da cache: walks over ta Achernar, Kathil, Ryerson, Summer, Skye, Benjamin and Pesht in dat order. Wow! Bet ya didn't knows I could says dem words! Dis helps gets da hyperwave communicator ta power up. By savin' da weapon shop owner durin' da robbery yas gets rewarded wits a laser rifle. Now dat's my kinda weapon! But I still likes usin' dat inferno thing against da infantry.

RED STORM RISING

Watch out for dose ASW choppers. Deys can really ruin yer day. Da best way ta gives dem a hard time is to attack dem with a stinger missle if yas got any left.

BIONIC GRANNY

Hey, dis broad's like me mum! Best ding ta do is place de storage media (cassette or disk) in da microwave oven or under da telephone. On ya hi-fi speakers while playing Megadeth is good too. Now leave it dere. Da world can only handle one lady like me mummy.

SHADOW GATE

Ya must get da shield from da lair. Den gets da spear an da axe. Now wear da helmet. Break da middle mirror wid de axe. My idea of a good time!

Well, I's in a good mood so here's some Master System hints. I had a lot of youse aks for 'em.

FANTASY ZONE

If ya buys and keeps four o' ya engines da timer for da weapons will last until ya ship is blowed up.

ROCKY

Well Apollo's a mean dude. Nearly as mean as me, but who's dis Bullwinkle guy wid da funny ears? I can't help ya wid Apollo, but Lang's a real softy. A real jelly belly. Jab 'em in da guts! Yeah! As for Drago get really close ta 'im and keeps punchin' till's he goes backwards. Get him inta da corner and ya's nearly got him!

Dat's about it, so ta rap up I'll gives ya some Sierra hints.

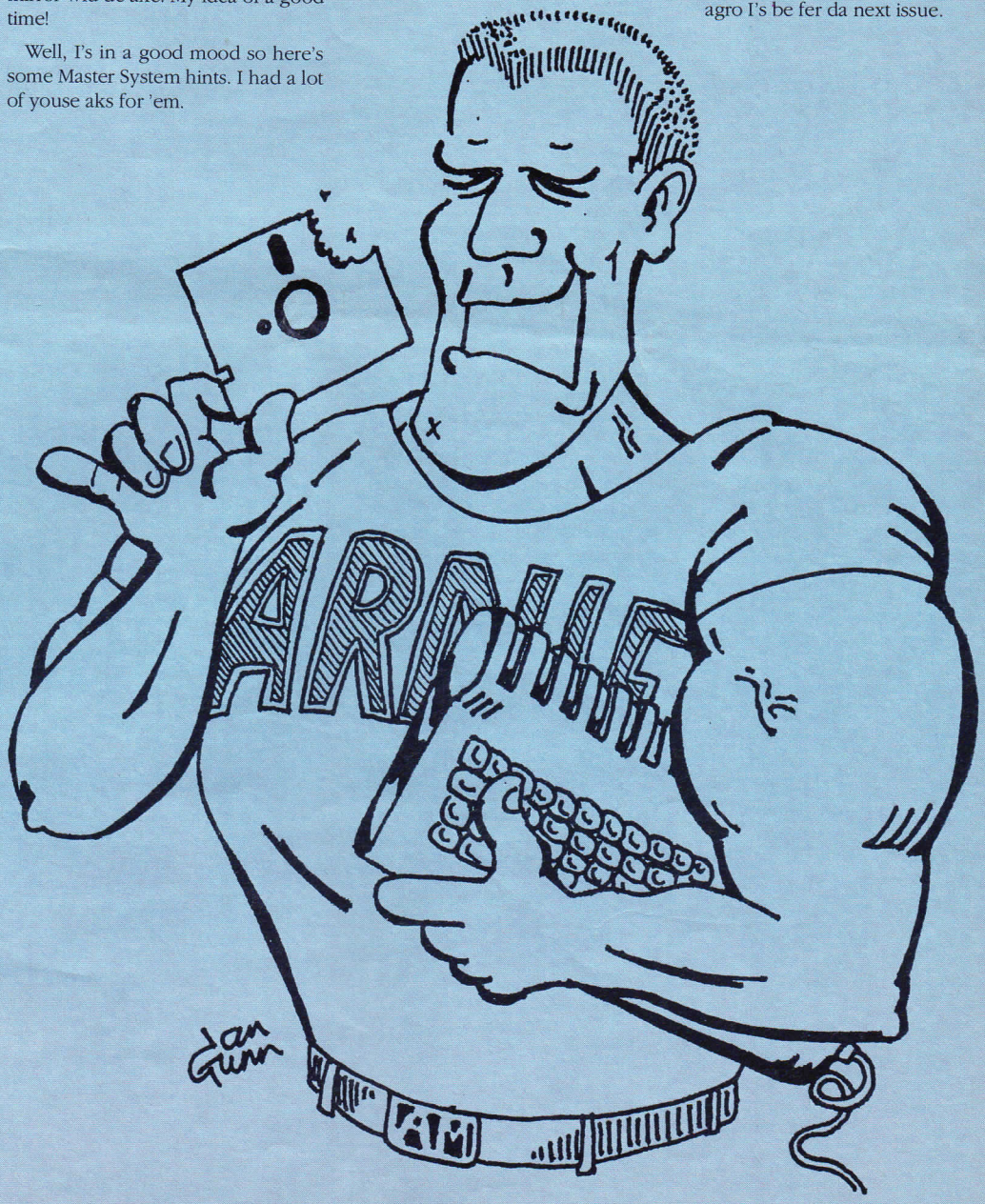
SPACE QUEST 3

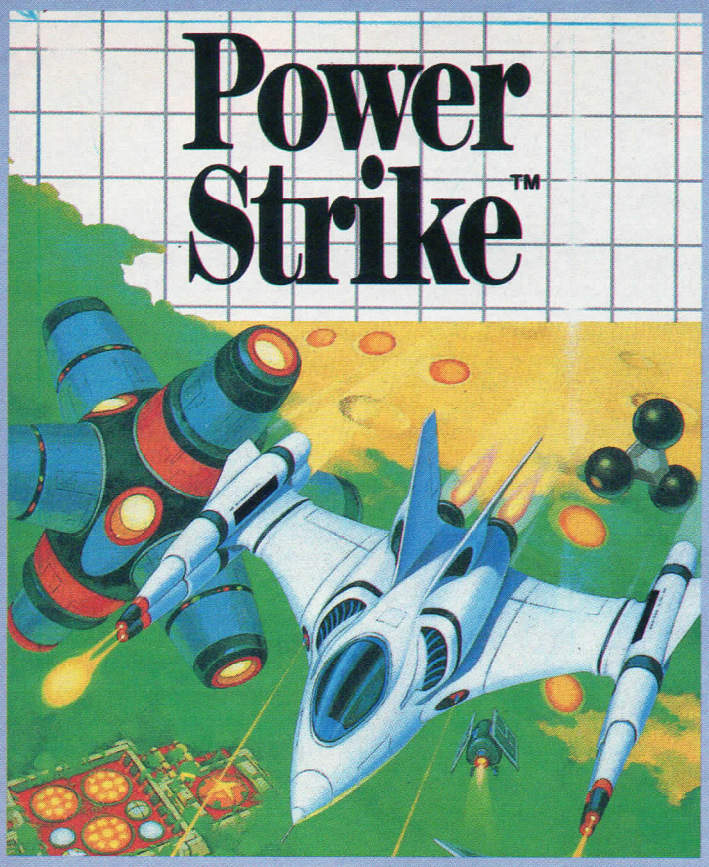
Wid most o' us dere come a time when yas needs lozza moola, cash, dough, da folding stuff. In dis game ya gonna have ta sells ya gem on planet Phleebhut or search around and in da seat o' da space ship.

HERO'S QUEST

Ta find da healer's ring go looks in da nest outside her house. Easy eh? If ya's muscled likes me ya won'ts have trouble gettin' it back. Wimpy wizards are better off practicin' magic as dey sure aren't strong enough ta do no climbin'.

Okay, times fer me ta go and don't fergets ta buy ya Big Arnie tee-shirt or I's comin' over ta your pad ta personally fits one around ya neck! Da more guys I sees wearin' dem da less agro I's be fer da next issue.





TERRA CRESTA RESURRECTED. PAUL METCALFE TELLS ALL.

This nifty shoot-'em-up is in the Xevious mold, but bears an even closer resemblance to Terra Cresta. It's an upward-scrolling landscape game, but with considerable skill required (and amusement provided) by the eight different special weapons. You start off with the usual shot type weapon and special weapon number 1, "Directional Shot", which sends a powerful burst of energy in the direction of motion of your ship - even backwards or sideways!

This is very cunning, as to use it you need to move TOWARDS the enemies you wish to shoot, a potentially dangerous maneuver! But there's more. From time to time you will observe numerals from one to eight on the ground, and occasionally carried by enemy ships; shooting them and sucessfully picking them up with your ship will change your special weapon or if the number is the same as the weapon you're already using, increase its power!

Each special weapon has its own uses, and there's plenty of fun to be had in trying them out. They are "Directional Shot", "Web Gun" (fires a web in front of your ship), "Laser Cannon", "Rolling Fire" (a deadly ball of fire circles your ship), "Homing Flame" (homing balls of fire!), "Swing Web" (a wall of fire weapon), "Plasma Ball" (a huge fireball hovering in front of your ship) and "Wipe Laser" (a laser beam that sweeps from side to side!).

But that's not all... there are also ships carrying "Power Chips", which if shot and picked up slowly but surely increase the power and speed of your ordinary shots. Another cunning feature is that at the instant you pick up any Power Chip or numeral, you become (very) temporarily immune to death, which gamers with perfect timing will enjoy exploiting to the full.

In summary, this could easily have been just another scrolling shoot-'em-up, but thanks to plenty of neat weapons to kill the alien scum with, there's more enjoyment to be had in Power Strike than it seems at first sight! I do wish the continue facility could start you in the middle of a stage instead of only at the beginning, but other than that I haven't a complaint - another very playable game from Sega.

MegaZone Scoreboard

POWER STRIKE

Graphics:	8
Colour:	8
Action:	9
Sound:	5
Documentation:	8
Mental Anguish:	4
Lasting Interest:	7
Value for money:	7
Overall out of 100:	70
Reviewed on:	Sega Master System
Distributor:	Ozisoft
RRP:	**$69.95**

PETER LINDEMANN PLAYS GALLOPING DOMINOES, ROLLS SNAKE-EYES.

At first I thought this game had to be a dud. I mean, who wants to play gambling games with a computer without the thrill of real money or real opponents? But once I started it up I was pleasantly surprised. Among the utterly boring Baccarat (you place your bet, and then you either win or lose. Yawn.) and the slightly boring but potentially lucrative slot machines, there's fun to be had with a half-decent Blackjack, a decent game of Poker and - wonder of wonders - a brilliantly programmed 3-D perspective pinball game!

I was somewhat annoyed by the fact that the Blackjack game doesn't have the "five and under" rule, but it kept me occupied for a while. Poker was more of a drawcard (heh) though, with a choice of four computer opponents and proper betting rules. The slot machines had their moments, especially when I won a jackpot, but best of all without a doubt was the pinball game; it was so good I couldn't help wishing Sega had released it with a couple of others as a Pinball Games cartridge. Very relaxing inbetween writing articles.... oops... better get back to work!

When you start the game you give your name (or let the computer pick a random one for you, if you're lazy!) and the receptionist will grubstake you $500. If you should be so lucky as to come away with more than $1000, you can even open an account to allow you to keep your earnings next time you play. According to the manual you need to make a cool million to break the bank, so I decided (just for the sake of a complete review you understand) to see what happens.

I did get to around $4000, but then things started going wrong. Finally in a burst of desperate optimism I blew the last of my cash on the $100 slot machines, hoping to win big. I lost. And the two-minute scene that followed as I went bankrupt had me in stitches for ten! Luckily, though, you can skip it if you are getting sick of going bankrupt, as is probably fairly likely.

All in all I ended up having quite a lot more fun than I expected. Casino Games is also a great way to remind yourself that real casinos are run to make money, and an easy way to lose yours, without actually forking out more than the price of the cartridge. Besides, the pinball game is free (I wish real ones were...) and will be worth hauling the cartridge out for long after the other games have palled.

MegaZone Scoreboard

CASINO GAMES

GRAPHICS:	10
COLOUR:	8
ACTION:	7
SOUND:	3
DOCUMENTATION:	7
MENTAL ANGUISH:	5
LASTING INTEREST:	6
VALUE FOR MONEY:	7
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	66.2
Reviewed on:	Sega Master System
Also for:	N/A Software
by:	Sega
Distributor:	OziSoft
R.R.P.:	**$69.95**

PAUL METCALFE USES BRAINS AND BRAWN TO PSYCHOPUNCH THE EVIL "VIPRON", WITH ADINA RIDING SHOTGUN.

What a pleasure; this is probably the first game I've reviewed that even comes within shouting distance of the classic, and so far unsurpassed by anything I've seen, Wonderboy III. The basic idea is that you are a fearless bounty hunter named Paladin (now where have I heard that name before?) fighting evil Cyborgs in their futuristic fortress.

You start off remarkably poorly armed for someone supposed to infiltrate an enemy fortress with just your fists and psychic powers. Yes, that's right, you have the amazing power to "punch" with your mind as well as your fists, sending a bolt of energy shooting at the dastardly foe. Unfortunately your mind can provide only so much energy, so it's usually worth saving your psychic punches for the tough cyborgs and dealing with the weaker ones with a swift punch in the nose or whatever their equivalent is.

Luckily, you've also got Adina on your side (a name strangely familiar to some of us here at Megacomp...) and she keeps in touch with you through your communicator telling you when you need to get a more powerful weapon or an item such as a shield or ID card. Such a helpful and efficient girl; don't now what I'd do without her.

From the main hall of the fortress you can enter one of seven warps leading to the seven areas "A" through "G" however you'll need ID cards to get through security doors at various places in the main hallway. These, of course, can be obtained by defeating the top guys hiding in various areas. Ultimately your goal is to kill the boss of them all in area "G", one Vipron by name.

Each area is divided into five levels of varying sizes and configurations, which are accessible only by using the lifts and are usually designed so that on most floors you can't get from one side to the other without going to another floor to get across; the lifts, likewise, don't necessarily go to all the floors. There is a very nice plan view of the area you are in which also shows your current location on screen at all times, which really helps you keep track.

From time to time you can find bombs which, after a one-second delay when dropped, kill everything near you except for some reason yourself. One drawback is that you have to press "up" to drop a bomb which is also both how you open doors and how you go up a floor while in a lift, so if you're not carefully positioned you can very easily inadvertently drop a bomb when you didn't mean to, thus wasting it. On the bright side, though, you select your weapons and equipment using the button on the second controller, which saves you from having to reach over the unit itself to press the pause button as in Wonderboy III.

Other things you can find include extra Life and extra Psychic power, about 1/4 of your maximum, not the full amount as many other games would! Luckily they reappear whenever you re-enter the level, so you can gather several if you can fight your way through the inevitable Cyborgs guarding the precious commodities who are also regenerated whenever you return!

One particularly nasty fact is that many of the later levels are completely dark, so you need a "light gun" in order to avoid dying horribly from something you can't even see. Even when you have a light gun, it lights up the area only for the fraction of a second that the laser bolt is on the screen! A very nice effect.

In summary, there's enough in this game to keep you amused for quite a while, but it's still more of an action game than an adventure. The graphics are a well executed and the various status displays on the screen are useful and well laid out. Anyway, I liked it!

MegaZone Scoreboard

CYBORG HUNTER

GRAPHICS:	8
COLOUR:	7
ACTION:	8
SOUND:	4
DOCUMENTATION:	8
MENTAL ANGUISH:	7
LASTING INTEREST:	8
VALUE FOR MONEY:	8
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	72.5
Reviewed on:	Sega Master System
Software By:	Sega
Distributor:	Ozisoft
RRP :	**$69.95**

PLASMA-JOCKEY PAUL METCALFE PULLS SOME "G'S", BUT GREMLINS STILL LIKE 3-D.

Hey ho, here we go again - another coin-op conversion of a 3-D perspective game. Last issue it was Space Harrier, this time it's "Galaxy Force". Unfortunately Galaxy Force suffers from several problems; firstly, although the first half of each scene is fairly decend free-flying free-for-all, the second half involving travelling through tunnels at high speed is virtually unplayable thanks to the difficulty of controlling your ship with Sega's D-pad controllers, and the sheer difficulty in navigating the t unnels without repeatedly colliding with the walls!

Another problem is that there are minor but annoying visual bugs at the top of the screen during the end of each screen. This is a shame, as otherwise the 3-D graphics are commendably well done. A decent effort if you want a 3-D flying game with some real speed, but unfortunately not exactly what I'd call a must-have! Another reasonable job from Sega.

MegaZone Scoreboard

GALAXY FORCE

GRAPHICS	8
COLOUR:	7
ACTION:	9
SOUND:	4
DOCUMENTATION:	7
MENTAL ANGUISH:	2
LASTING INTEREST:	5
VALUE FOR MONEY:	6
OVERALL, OUT OF 100:	60
Reviewed on:	Sega Master System
Also for:	N/A Software
by:	Sega
Distributor:	Ozi Soft
R.R.P.:	**$69.95**

PIRAT

SOFTWARE PIRACY HAS PROVED SUCH A POPULAR ISSUE THAT WE KEEP ON GETTING MAIL ON THE SUBJECT. A SYDNEY READER WROTE:

"Whilst scanning the usual lot of useless magazines lining the usually boring shelves of the local newsagent, I noticed your magazine and ignored it as soon as I read the title. That is, until I noticed one of the articles listed on the cover: "Pirates have their say". A quick flip through the pages, and I found a section where pirates were actually allowed to speak their piece. I bought the magazine with intent to write you guys a letter, although it wasn't until I'd read it that I knew I'd made a mistake. I was expecting intelligent feedback from "real" crackers who were stating their case. What did I get? Kids who were still at school, bragging about how many disks they owned, completely ignorant of the whole comings and goings of the home computer industry over the last 10 or so years which I've been involved. At least the letter on page 52 (I think it's your 4th issue) was readable and didn't just fall into the mindless childlike crap bucket that the piracy section contained. Deciding whether to publish this letter could be interesting, as you may simply scare everyone off, or get thousands of annoyed schoolies sending you mail.

I find it hard to label myself as a cracker, in that the label itself is part of this childlike arena. Although literally, yes I am a cracker and have been for the last 8 years or so. Now to state a few facts to support my position, not to gain your sympathy or to make me feel like a hero, but to at least try and separate "our breed" from the full on pirates, in much the same way as our friend on page 52. You mentioned an article you did on crackers in your 3rd isue, but I haven't got that issue, so I may be simply repeating what was said.

Yes I have lots of software. Most people do. I'm not going to mention how much, as that isn't important.

Most crackers crack for the following reasons:

1. The ego boost. A god like presence (corny as it sounds) amongst amateurs and pseudo-crackers gives you a great high. Like a great scientist walking into a room of students. You don't need to say anything, as the respect is automatically implied by the people present.
2. A kick. Removing a copy-protection scheme that a large company produced is another great boost. To think that you got around a major worldwide organisation's routines without access to their source code!
3. Knowledge. Most crackers have an incredible craving for knowledge, that'll never be satisfied. Each new crack is a test (well, in the old days they used to be, as most companies are now either admitting defeat, or making the cracking process tedious and boring) in itself. And as most crackers are also developers, or have the knowledge to become one, this comes as a great short term boost, or fix!
4. Morals and ethics. All "real" crackers (and hackers for that matter) live by them. You won't find a real cracker selling pirated software! Or even bragging about how good he is. We all know the risks, but we also can't do without the fix! I get given software to crack, which I then crack and give back to the source. What they then do with their backup that I made for them is purely their business. Of course I keep a copy for my records, and if I actually start using the product, then I'll buy it but still keep the cracked copy as a kind of trophy.

Although I can't really speak for the majority of computer users I can speak for "the rest of us" in saying that we protect our own. There is an unwritten code, and because of this, no "real" crackers get caught. The occasional school kid (such as the jerks who wrote into your column to get their names in print to impress their mates, but then again I probably seem to be doing the same) will muck up the rules and cause panic in the hearts of those who would lose the most (us crackers - i.e. "I know your real name, and I'm going to tell the police"), but these schoolies soon disappear after a year or so and things settle down again. I myself have had a few close calls thanks to these mindless jealous brats.

Much is the same for those "cracking clubs", who are a typical fly by night "let's copy the US and live in a fantasy world" concern who don't consider the risks involved with what they are doing, and soon leave the scene again after a couple of years.

Since the copyright laws of 1984 drove most crackers either underground, or from the scene altogether, increasing blame has been placed on them for what is happening in the industry. For example, most hackers are "nappy hackers", whereas the very few real hackers are either deeply involved in the industry at their work, or have a real love and respect for the industry which they "use". Working in the mainframe industry myself, I would hire any of these real hackers on the spot. As for crackers, their knowledge of software technology is unequalled, as most software engineers were crackers (or hackers as they were collectively called then), to start with. I would therefore hire a real cracker ON THE SPOT! And I have done just that in the past. I dabbled in hacking quite a few years back, but as most people in the industry soon find out, you can do more interesting things in your job than by hacking (i.e. why would a security administrator bother hacking? It would be too easy!)

Here I will concede a few points. Yes we do supply most of the software the commercial pirtes sell (the rest is copied by bit copiers). And we can't really justify this by saying it's not our fault they do illegal things with our cracks. Also, yes we are breaking the law in regard to copyrights. However, you may not be aware of how this can be justified thanks to bad management and insight by the software companies. The loophole! When a product is released from the US (also a legal spaghetti bowl!) and crack it, I can legally get away with it, as the local copyrights DO NOT apply.

TE'S CAVE

If an Australian company suddenly says "that game is selling well, we better import it! (which at times can be up to six months or so after the US release), and clinches a license with the US distributor, then the copyright is then respected locally as well.

However, all previous activity is considered legal, and illegality begins with copyright infringements which continue after the fact. A case in point is a game called "Karateka" for the Apple II from Broderbund. It is legal to copy it and give it out, as a local distributor has NEVER handled it. How this affects selling the pirated copies I'm not sure, but that seems more illegal than just handing it out. The job of the police therefore is quite involved, as each program of the pirate has to be checked for copyright infringements. On one single pirate, who has an everage of (believe this fact), 2000 disks, the case could literally go on for years and years!

To conclude, I myself hate piracy. Being an author myself, I know what it's like to see pirated copies of your programs, but the cracking side is, I believe sincerely, a necessary part of the education of up and coming computer technicians. After experiencing the knowledge, dedication, and morals of university students and home computer enthusiasts in the form of crackers, hackers, and pure hobbyists, I can tell you which one I'd hire, as I have before...

Please leave the crackers and hackers alone. Ignoring all the morals, we are doing some illegal things, but if you wanted to discuss the morality of the laws and software companies, I could talk for days to morally justify my position. I know I'm a hyprocrite, so you can't get me on that argument. Gone are the days of sharing information on how to crack software. Ever since the school kid users entered the arena, cracking tips have become "need to know" only. Apart from the egotistical reaosns, this is also because we don't want the software downgraded by people who don't know what they're doing. I respect the authors, their product, and their idea. I don't respect most of the software companies, as all they care about is a quick buck, which can be proved by simply comparing software catalogues of Australian vs US companies, in regard to range and price.

Lastly, decreasing software prices will never stop piracy. It won't even stop part of it! People pirate because it's free. If it cost $20 or even $10, they would still pirate it. A case in point is is shareware. Everyone can copy shareware, as long as you send a nominal fee to the author (say around $10-$20). All the shareware authors I know have been astounded at the fact that HARDLY NO-ONE ever sends them money! No one can be bothered! As computer software becomes more and more common, piracy will increase. It's up to the companies involved to crack down on these people and boost some life into the industry. But please, don't blame the crackers!"

Frank, from West Australia, had this to say on the subject:

"Like most other ordinary, law abiding citizens of this country, even though I own and use a computer (tsk, tsk, tsk) I am not a criminal and aim to remain a reasonable person! The computer is my hobby, my pastime, my favourite entertainment. For that, as with everything else, I have to pay a price. I do not begrudge that. It still costs me less than nightly sessions at the pub or disco or casino, and is probably better for my health. What I do object to is being charged half a week's wage for a program that does not fit my needs. When I buy a new program I have no idea as to its performance. I know, I know, all it can do is written on the pack. Unfortunately most of the time the blurb is just that, a blurb, and often a smelly one at that! Then when I open the pack, I'm told that I may NOT make a copy of this disk under any circumstance. If I need a copy for backup I can send a form suitably accompanied by an amount of money and then I can wait and hope that the distributor will find it in his heart to send me the copy before I bust the over protected, nearly impossible to load original program. In any case when or if I manage to get the blasted thing going, I find that it does not suit me. Now I read the page or so of small print that came with the disk and what do I find? Basically, that I have been done. NO guarantee that this thing will work!, sold on an as is basis (like second hand goods); even if this thing wrecks your system that's just tough cheddar!, we, the manufacturer don't give a hoot about it, we've got your dough, try and get it back now, we're well covered, you get nothing from us, in any way, regardless of whose fault it was. In other words you buy software at your (and yours alone) risk. You pay the money, we give you something that you cannot even try beforehand, and if it does not do what you understood it would, then my boy, that's just too bad. Ever purchased a car under those conditions? Ever bought ANYTHING that you could not return for a refund (or at least an exchange), ever been so helpless in your purchases before?

So, now the software companies are crying because people copy their programs. I feel for them. Sure they spend a lot of money in producing the stuff. But why, oh why, can't they be a little more accommodating to those who actually bought their stuff? Why can't they be reasonable business people and offer a fair guarantee that their product will perform at least as described (read the small print).

As I said before, I'm a normal, law abiding citizen. At least as far as most things are concerned. I do not consider myself to be a "pirate", but yes, I do "obtain" programs, yes, I do "provide" programs, yes I do break the law! What else can I do? How many times do I have to pay $100 or more for something that is useless to me? I have so called pirated programs, yes. I "obtain" them to test the value. If I like what I see, then, WITHOUT FAIL, I buy the real thing. If I don't like what I see, then boy! oh boy! Am I glad I saw the "pirated" copy first!! What use is it to me to have a fairly complicated program (painting, database, spreadsheet, even game) if I don't know the finer details of using it (instructions). Does anyone think it is funny to grope in the dark (unless she's pretty) for days on end. Does any one of those software company executives think for a minute that people enjoy using interesting programs only to half capacity? Do they think it is funny to buy something not knowing if it will do the job? Do they think it is funny to wait weeks or months for a reply to a registration form? I personally have NEVER received anything that acknowledged my registration as a legal user of any program I have bought. And that goes from the days I used to have a VIC20!

So, really, what I am saying is that if the software manufacturers think that they can continue to screw the people that actually buy their stuff, the least they can expect is that someone, somewhere is going to continue to screw them too. I don't consider that I do them any harm by attempting to ensure that what I buy is what I want. I'm just sorry that they have cornered me into such a disgraceful situation. I do NOT sell copies of their programs, never have done, and I'm sure I never will. The idea that hacking (wrong word, but it will have to do) is like a drug addiction is a lot of bulldust. Maybe so for a very few idiots, but I'm sure it is not for normal people."

LET'S HEAR YOUR POINT OF VIEW.

We don't dob, so feel free to send your thoughts to:

Pirates' Cave, MegaZone Magazine, 1/40 Glenhuntly Rd. Elwood 3184 VIC.

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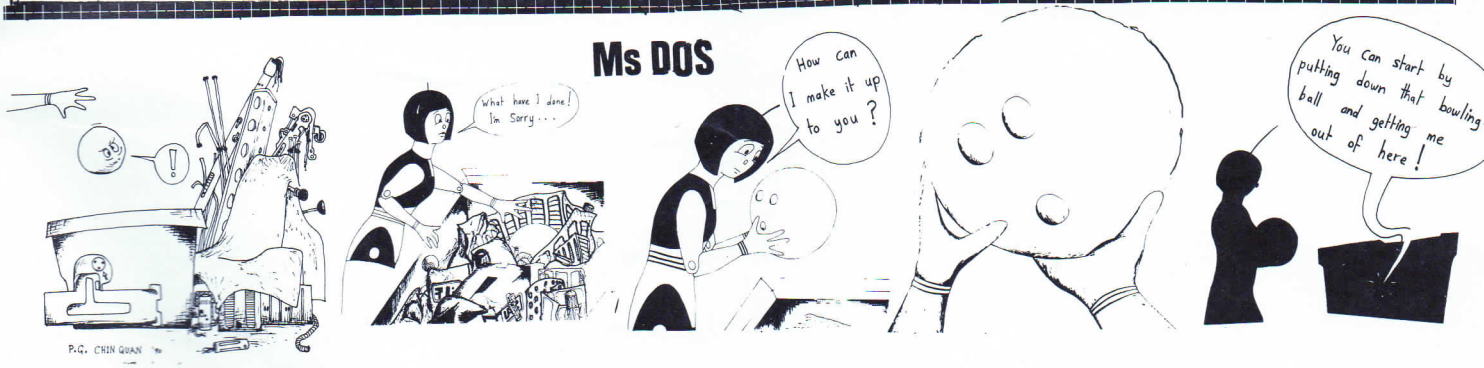

Ms DOS
What have I done! I'm Sorry...
How can I make it up to you ?
You can start by putting down that bowling ball and getting me out of here !
P.Q. CHIN QUAN

CYBERBALL CONTEST

Questor is pleased to announce the arrival of the sport of the future, CYBERBALL, and have called all football fans to caricature the player of their choice, whether the code be Aussie Rules, Rugby, Soceer, Gridiron, Gaelic or the Brockian Ball-Crushing variant.

All entries must be drawn in black ink on white paper or clear transparency. Make them funny, guys. Preference will NOT be given to anything wearing Richmond colours (Why not? - sez Ed.).

The first prize is a 5-foot Cyberball cardboard player figure. 10 second prizes of Cyberball inflatable American footballs. 10 third prizes of Cyberball boxer shorts (tres sexy!). 5 fourth prizes of Amiga Cyberball games.

. . . Right now, I can hear you salivating over this, muddled up with the "Why is a cardboard cutout worth more than a copy of the actual game prog?" Well, O Prince, all will be made clear in the fullness of time. Just make them funny, and give us some idea of whom they are meant to represent. Hut one, hut two, hike!

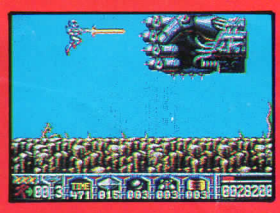
The game is a mechanistic variant of good old-fashioned Gridiron. The only problem is that your players are robotic, six metres tall, and tend to explode after gaining possession of the ball. It is a conversion of the Tengen original, and by all accounts, a "good 'un". Check out the review next ish.

CYBERBALL CARICATURES CONTEST RULES:

1) One entry per person.
2) All entries remain the property of Megazone (since we can't return 'em).
3) All entries must be drawn. No holograms accepted.
4) Your player must be identified and wear his team colours (in black & white)
5) Entry to the competition is free. So don't expect a cash prize!
6) Each entry must have your name, address and phone number.
7) Artistic merit, use of bionic implants and genetic engineering will be taken into consideration. Tyrell Corp. patents excluded.
8) Winners of the boxer shorts will not be required to wear them until they stand on their own accord in polite company.
10) SOMEONE HAS STOLEN RULE NINE!
11) Employees of Megazone and its subsidiaries, friends, relations and general hangers on are not permitted to enter. . .Which actually annoys the hell out of us guys. (Gee, I did so want those shorts! . . .Wonder if they have them in "Super Humungous Gross"?)
12) Entry in this competition is an agreement to abide by the rules. No matter how ludicrous they may seem, so there.

X-out

TURRICAN



TGM STAR PLAYER 94%

ASM HIT!

RAVE!

FUN*1

ZZAP ITALIA 98%

ZERO HERO

97%

Rainbow Arts

C+VG HIT! 93%

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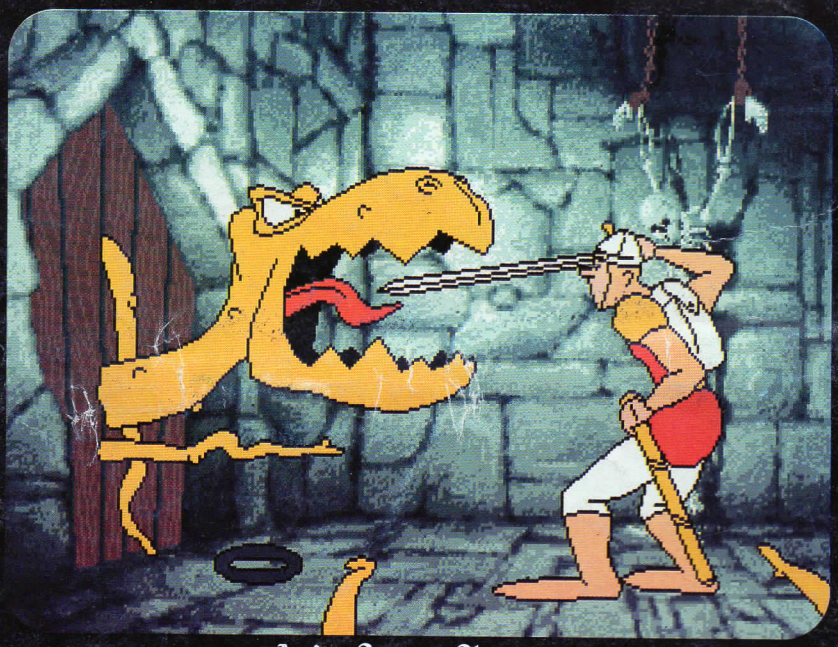

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